

# **Commerce, Little Magazines and Modernity: New York, 1915-1922**

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the theme of commerce in four magazines of literature and the arts, all published in New York between 1915 and 1922. The magazines are *The Seven Arts* (1916-1917), *291* (1915-1916), *The Soil* (1916-1917), and *The Pagan* (1916-1922). The division between art and commerce is addressed in the text of all four, in a variety of different ways, and the results of that supposed division are explored for each magazine.

In addition ‘commerce’ is also used in this thesis in the sense of conversation or communication, and is used as a way to describe them in the body of their immediate cultural environment. In the case of *The Seven Arts*, as discussed in Chapter 1, the theme of commerce with the past, present, and future is examined: the way that the magazine incorporates the European classical past and rejects the more recent intellectual past; the way it examines the industrial present, and the projected future of American arts and letters. In the case of *The Soil* and *291* (the subjects of Chapters 2 and 3) there is extensive commerce between them in the sense of intercommunication, a rival dialogic demonstrating both ideological and economic rivalry. These two chapters comprise an extensive examination of the relationship between the magazines, and shows how much of this involves commerce in the financial sense. The fourth magazine, *The Pagan*, is concerned with a different sense of commerce, in the form of its rejection of the American capitalist system, and is critically examined here for the first time.

The introduction is a survey of examples from the whole field of American periodicals of the time, particularly those immediately relevant to the magazines described here, and acts to delineate the field of scholarship and also to justify the particular approach used. The conclusion provides a summary of the foregoing chapters, and also suggests ways in which each magazine approaches the dissemination, or ‘sale’ of the idea of the new.

# Commerce, Little Magazines, and Modernity: New York, 1915-1922

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## Introduction

Whatever the format, scope, or preferred topics of conversation, little magazines tend to share two features: a vexed relationship to a larger, mainstream public and an equally vexed relationship to money.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Idea of 'Commerce'*

I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman –

...

We have one sap and one root –  
Let there be commerce between us.<sup>2</sup>

When Ezra Pound wrote those words in *Lustra* in 1916 he was not merely referring to a lessening of his dislike for the work of Whitman, which he had disapproved of until then. He meant that he was now ready to include Whitman's poetry as part of his own literary heritage, and to let it influence him. For Pound then, as later, his own 'make it new' meant the incorporation of tradition into work, a 'commerce' which acknowledged that tradition but at the same time resulted in something altogether different. This thesis hinges on the idea of commerce, used in a number of different ways, enabling a discussion of four magazines which often do communicate with the past, with the future, with one another, and with other publications. But there are many other ways in which the idea of commerce is fundamental to these publications, ranging from a pervading assumption that commerce (in the sense of day-to-day business transactions) and intellect occupy separate spheres, to the condemnation, in some cases, of the whole American commercial system.

This becomes clearer following an examination of various definitions of the word. The American Heritage Dictionary gives four separate usages: 1) an interchange of goods or commodities, esp. on a large scale between different countries (foreign commerce) or between different parts of the same country (domestic commerce);

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<sup>1</sup> Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible, *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.7.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra Pound, 'A Pact' from *Lustra* (1916), in *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems 1908-1969* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 44.

trade; business; 2) social relations, esp. the exchange of views, attitudes, etc.; 3) sexual intercourse; 4) intellectual or spiritual interchange; communion. The Oxford English Dictionary further gives the origin as *Commercium* (Latin 'trade'), and *Merx* (Merchandise). The OED definition does not extend to the 'spiritual' communion that was perhaps included in Pound's meaning.<sup>3</sup> It also cites Spenser and Tennyson, and later James Russell Lowell (1887) from *Democracy* where Lowell writes of 'commerce with fresh forms of nature and new varieties of man'. It also lists 'discourse' and 'conversation' as examples. All the varieties inherent in definitions (1), (2) and (4) are employed through the following chapters, while also addressing the 'vexed relationship to money' which is very much in evidence in all the magazines discussed.

Whichever definition we use, the idea of trade and merchandise, at its semantic root, is therefore inseparable from the idea of social relations between people. The bond between commercial and intellectual activity is in fact so strong that, as indicated in chapter 3, a recent writer has referred to the conditions of trade as 'natural' and 'easy'.<sup>4</sup> This thesis explores relationships between capital, trade, and social and cultural interaction within a selection of 'little magazines' which were published in New York between 1915 and 1922, although my emphasis is primarily on the American pre-war period (1915-1917). The use of independent and individual magazines which, although (of course) they relied on capital, explicitly differentiated themselves from those publications which existed primarily to make a profit for their owners, is a constructive way to examine these kinds of relationships. Many American writers and artists active in the years immediately preceding World War One articulated very strongly their support for the idea that there was, particularly in American society, an implied contradiction between commercial and intellectual activity. The distinction is still strongly employed, or at least goes unquestioned, in a great deal of critical writing.

This thesis, however, builds on and expands the work of a number of key critics, many of whom are specialists in the study of periodicals, who have already pointed

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<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, though *Leaves of Grass* refers six times to 'commerce' always with the specific meaning of trade between nations or bodies of people.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth L. Bohan, *Looking into Walt Whitman: American Art 1850-1920* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), p. 173. See also chapter 3 of this thesis.

out the inextricable influence of standard commercial methods of sales, marketing, presentation, advertising, on small and large magazines and indeed on major works of modernism. Their work will be referenced throughout. The magazines are examined in the light of the ‘vexed relationship’, but also in the context of the much wider understanding of the term ‘commerce’ as defined above. McKible and Churchill go on to point out that ‘the magazines’ relation to capital is *itself* an ideological difference inseparable from their aesthetic stances’, and these ideologies are explored in these readings of each of four magazines, made all the more interesting since three of them are in fact trade outlets.<sup>5</sup> In Pound’s poem, ‘commerce’ is used in the sense of definition (4), ‘intellectual or spiritual interchange; communion’, and it is therefore used here, particularly in the first chapter, to articulate a suggestion of the interchange between the present and the past, the present and the future, tradition and the new, the conventional and the unconventional, the modern and the experimental. The term is extended, too, to apply to the sometimes intentional association between disciplines: between art and literature or music and literature, or a conversation between magazine and magazine, sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory. Commerce is discourse; the particular character of any magazine is inherent in the tension between contributions or between editorials and creative matter, or between advertisements, marketing strategies, market-driven necessities, and avowed ethical convictions. According to Robert Scholes and Sean Latham, ‘Periodicals ... create and occupy typically complex and often unstable positions in sometimes collaborative and sometimes competitive cultural networks’.<sup>6</sup> The discussion which forms the body of this thesis often draws attention to these kinds of complexities: to the extraordinary dialogic intertext which extends from periodical to periodical.

All these views are acknowledged, incorporated, and extended in my approach. First, importantly, the extended theme of ‘commerce’ allows me to articulate the many extraordinary interconnections and differences not only between the magazines and their surrounding literary or historical culture but between magazine and magazine. Second, specific examples are explored of the kind of competition to which Scholes

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<sup>5</sup> McKible and Churchill, *Little Magazines & Modernism*, p. 75. 291 and *The Soil* were produced from private galleries, and *The Pagan* from a bookshop.

<sup>6</sup> Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, ‘The Changing Profession: The Rise of Periodical Studies’, *PMLA* 121.2 (March 2005), p. 528. Latham and Scholes examine here detailed examples of the dialogics of little magazines.



and Latham refer, so that my second and third chapters describe, for example, an aesthetic disagreement which incorporates, or perhaps results from, a significant commercial rivalry. This will also dispel any illusion that the intellectual culture of New York at that time could be characterised as in any way homogenous. Chapter 4 examines in detail, for instance, (to my knowledge for the first time) the editorial and political stance of a magazine (*The Pagan*) which not only offered a criticism of the New York 'bohemia' now normally associated with the idea of American modernism, but which also associated its criticism with a condemnation of contemporary American capitalism. The third way in which this discussion adds to the now considerable body of literature on periodical culture relates to its methodology: it takes a 'horizontal', and largely comparative, view of the four chosen magazines. Their immediate inter-relationships are examined as well as their differences, resulting in a very particular view of the periodical culture of the time. This approach also places a new emphasis on the complexity and importance of the field as a discursive forum. In effect the periodical field is approached as an expansion of one particular node ('The Little Review') of an instance of Pierre Bourdieu's plan of any particular field of cultural production.

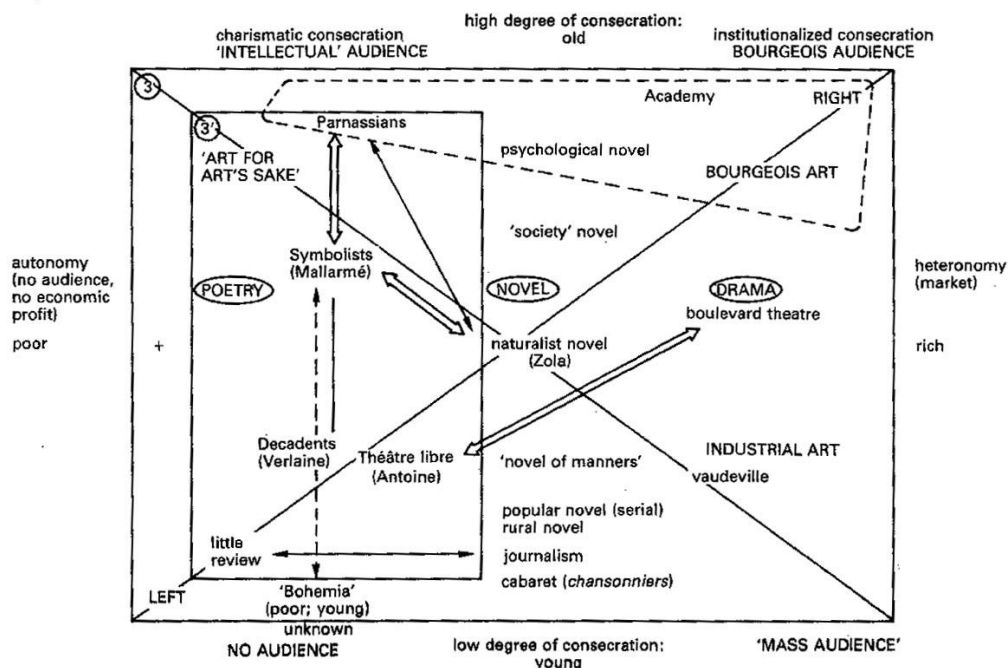
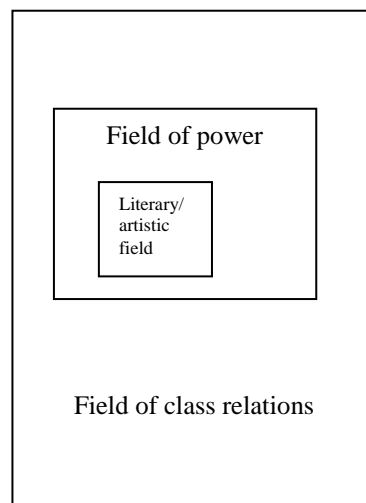


Figure 2 French literary field in the second half of the 19th century; + = positive pole, implying a dominant position; - = negative pole, implying a dominated position

The diagram above represents the notion of a ‘field of art’ as a constantly-shifting, constantly changing collection of conflicts for position, as suggested by Bourdieu in *The Field of Cultural Production*, and while it relates to the French late nineteenth-century literary scene, it is intended as an example applicable to any artistic or literary field.<sup>7</sup> According to Bourdieu’s theory, while such a field is relatively autonomous it lies within, and is intrinsically connected to, the field of power (consisting of the ‘laws of political and economic profit’) which is ultimately governed by an overall field of class relations. This notion he represents with a broader schematic diagram:



All these fields are seen as struggles for ascendancy, and Bourdieu’s overlapping model is clearly complex.<sup>8</sup> The idea of fluid interrelated positions, however, is a useful referent.

There are clearly anomalies in the attempt to delineate a cultural field diagrammatically or to generalise from it: first, to enable him to posit a trajectory or a position for any of these larger groups, Bourdieu must himself have pre-assigned them certain cultural positions or values.<sup>9</sup> Second, it would seem that any attempt to apply this, or any kind of schematic, to artistic production in the twenty-first century would

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<sup>7</sup> Diagram from Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Field of Cultural Production’ in *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), p. 49.

<sup>8</sup> Diagram and description, *ibid* pp. 38-39; I refer again to Bourdieu’s idea of containing ‘fields’ in the conclusion, with respect to the artistic ideas represented in *The Soil* (see page 218).

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed contentious discussion of the aesthetic basis of Bourdieu’s sociology of literature, see Jonathan Loesberg, ‘Bourdieu and the Sociology of Aesthetics’, *English Literary History* 60.4 (Winter 1993), pp. 1033-1056.

become so crowded and complex as to be ineffective. Further, while ‘the little review’ in this example might appeal to, or be intellectually available to, only a small audience, the idea that this is necessarily on the political left, and non-bourgeois, is impossible to maintain for the period of American literary and artistic history in which I am interested, and my thesis will describe fluid positions on behalf of the editors of, and the contributors to, small periodicals. This Introduction discusses just some of the difficulties inherent in categorization. While it is true that all the small periodicals addressed here make ‘no economic profit’ and may overtly subscribe to the idea of ‘art for art’s sake’, they all have commercial interests of one kind or another, and although they also generally lay emphasis on the opposition between artistic and financial concerns, none altogether succeeds in separating these. Bourdieu’s valuable and complex work attempts to quantify and analyse this interrelationship, and uses effective terminology, some of which I have adopted in this thesis.

Bourdieu’s ideas are indeed primarily used in this thesis as descriptive tools: as points of reference and as a way of delineating social relationships between literary products in a field, rather than as a basis for contention. I have made reference throughout, for instance, to his seminal concept of the sociological paradox inherent in the ‘art world’: the way in which ‘the literary and artistic world is so ordered that those who enter it have an interest in disinterestedness.’<sup>10</sup> Another way in which Bourdieu’s terminology helps to articulate this discussion is in the employment of the terms ‘cultural capital’ and ‘symbolic capital’ which have been distinguished (by Randal Johnson) as follows:

*Symbolic Capital* refers to degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (*connaissance*) and recognition (*reconnaissance*). *Cultural capital* concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions.<sup>11</sup>

These concepts of capital are used particularly when describing the editorial trajectory of these periodicals, during discussion of the stated indifference or aversion to monetary gain by three out of the four, and the ambivalence of the other.

Lastly, for me the interdisciplinarity of this study is crucial. Included in each chapter is some discussion of the commerce, or relation, between the magazine’s form and its

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<sup>10</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Randal Johnson, introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 7.

function, building on ideas raised by Edward Bishop, who questions, through a consideration of the market effects of particular printed formats, the assumption that most little magazines are necessarily avant-garde as opposed to modern or modernist.<sup>12</sup> The thesis is not confined purely to the investigation of literary contributions, but art and, a little more unusually, music are included in the discussion: the four magazines taken together celebrate an extraordinary variety of cultural production. This ignores the limited definition sometimes put forward of the term ‘little magazine’ as referring exclusively to magazines of literature and poetry.<sup>13</sup> The inclusive approach also necessarily leads to some discussion, through the body of the thesis, of the nature and the extent of the ‘avant-garde’ in American art forms. Before going on to detail the reason for my choice in the case of each periodical, the following section sheds some light on the extent, and variety of the field of American periodicals at the time in question, a field of production which is consistently referenced throughout this thesis. Subsequently some of the major bibliographies and critical works which have had a bearing on magazine scholarship in the twentieth century are documented, which also clearly contribute to the larger field of research of which this work is a small part.

### *Little and Large: The Field of Magazines and Periodicals in pre-World War I America*

‘Magazines – like individual canonical authors – have their meaning and effect not in isolation but in relation to others’ writes Alan Golding.<sup>14</sup> In this section the chosen magazines are used as points of departure from which to cite examples of other periodicals. Developing Golding’s notion of ‘the dialogics of modernism’, this section will range through examples of other small magazines and of mainstream, larger-

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<sup>12</sup> Edward Bishop, ‘Re: Covering Modernism – Format and Function in Little Magazines’, in Willison, Gould, and Chernaik, eds., *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace* (London: MacMillan, 1996), pp. 287-319. For other relevant discussions see Theodore Peterson, (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1956), George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and George Bornstein, ed., *Representing Modernist Texts: Editing as Interpretation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> For instance see R. J. Ellis, ‘The UK Little Magazine Field’, *New British Poetry: The Scope of the Possible* ed. Robert Hampson and Peter Barry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) who gives as part of his ‘definition’: ‘Little magazines primarily, or only, publish poetry and/or fiction and/or other forms of imaginative writing’.

<sup>14</sup> Golding, in ‘*The Dial, The Little Review, and the Dialogics of Modernism*’, McKible and Churchill, *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches*, p. 68.

circulation publications, and will serve to illustrate the unusual diversity of the period and region, and of the critical and cultural field in which the magazines expressed their views. Producers and editors of minor-circulation magazines invariably continued to write for the larger ones, so the field is always a site of fluidity, of constantly-shifting cultural formations and interpersonal regroupings. The magazines under discussion are *The Seven Arts*, 291, *The Soil*, and *The Pagan*.

*The Seven Arts* is arguably the most well-known of the four. It was staffed by more or less established writers, and there is a broad network of periodicals with which these authors were associated and in which their work had appeared. The editor, James Oppenheim, had already published, and continued to publish, a great deal of 'popular' fiction which has received almost no attention since his death. The well-established popular magazine *Harper's*, for example, published an endless stream of quite 'un-modern' stories, some of which were Oppenheim's. Between 1907 and 1917 a sample range of New York publications in which his work also appeared includes *Appleton's Magazine* (1906-1909), *Atlantic Monthly* (1862-present), *Century Illustrated Monthly* [*Scribner's*] (1881-1930), *Forum* (1886-1930), *Harper's Monthly* (1850-1995), *The Lady's Realm* (1896-1914), *McBride's* (1868-1930), *Nash's and Pall Mall* (1914-1937) for stories entitled 'The Love-Life of a Woman', 'Real Love' and 'Heart Hunger', *Poet Lore* (1889-), *The Public* (1898-1919), *Putnam's* (1906-1910), and *Theatre Arts* (1916-1964).<sup>15</sup> Oppenheim is perhaps an extreme example of youthful

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<sup>15</sup> *Appleton's Magazine* (1903-1909) was a popular, uncontroversial, illustrated magazine of short fiction and articles. A sample from 1907 writes of the popularisation of grand opera as an antidote to 'rescue the public from the era of ragtime and coon songs' but also of a 'renaissance in the art of dancing' perpetrated by Isadora Duncan and others, stemming from the influence of Nietzsche. *The Atlantic Monthly* (1862- ) was subtitled 'A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics'. *The Atlantic Monthly* (now *The Atlantic*) was a predominantly liberal magazine of cultural and political commentary, edited from 1909 to 1938 by Ellery Sedgwick. *Century Illustrated* or *Scribner's* (1881-1930) was a popular magazine mainly featuring illustrated fiction. *The Forum* (1886-1930), a general magazine of culture and the arts, merged later with *Century* to become *Forum and Century*. *Harper's Monthly*, ancestor to the current *Harper's Bazaar* and *Harper's Magazine*, a popular, general-interest magazine of literature, current affairs, and the arts. *The Lady's Realm*, as its title suggests, was an up-market, liberal, early women's magazine of literature, arts, and current affairs with regular society columns and profiles of the aristocracy. *McBride's* had been generally known as *Lippincott's*, which was a magazine of 'literature, science, and education'. *McBride's* existed under that name only during 1915-1916. *Poet Lore* according to the web site of the Writer's Center is the 'oldest continuously-published poetry magazine in the United States' (<https://www.writer.org/pubs/poet-lore.asp>) begun in 1889 and currently published in Maryland by The Writer's Center. At the time of Oppenheim's contributions it published a miscellany of poetry, drama, reviews and short fiction. In 1910 it was edited in Boston by Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke and included poetry by Sara Teasdale and a review by Harriet Monroe (see <http://tinyurl.com/rxxbkt>).

literary prolixity.<sup>16</sup> Most of the editorial group of *The Seven Arts* also continued to contribute regularly to *The New Republic*, a left-of-centre fortnightly of politics and the arts with which most of them were originally associated. Sometimes they also contributed to the high quality, but relatively conservative, *Dial*, then a liberal monthly discussion forum. A writer of particular interest in *The Seven Arts* was the contemporary art critic Willard Huntington Wright. Wright briefly edited *The Smart Set*, a comparatively upmarket journal which nevertheless, under his control, published original, experimental, wide-ranging, and controversial work. Under the subsequent editorship of H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan, *The Smart Set*, not normally classified as a 'little' or even modernist, magazine, saw the first printing of work by a number of new and important writers. This included some of the *Dubliners* stories of James Joyce, although it was *The Little Review* which gained subsequent cachet, partly for having defied the censorship laws by publishing *Ulysses* in serial form. To take a different example, the early work of Scott Fitzgerald was 'discovered' in the early twenties, not by *The Little Review* or *Secession* or even *The Dial*, but by *Collier's*, *Esquire*, and *The Smart Set*.<sup>17</sup>

Within the group of artists connected with the magazine *291*, Marius De Zayas was commercially established, having worked since 1907 as an illustrator and caricaturist for *The New York World*, a long-running daily newspaper which holds the distinction of having published the first English Language crossword in 1913.<sup>18</sup> Around the time that De Zayas' more radical graphic work appeared in Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* and in *291*, he had also illustrated a book of essays on Vaudeville artists in a distinctive and recognizable, but not particularly controversial, style, with caricatures of well-known stage artists.<sup>19</sup> *291* the magazine is intensely interested in the modern and experimental; meanwhile Stieglitz's own photographs, and those of his colleagues,

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<sup>16</sup> Oppenheim's contract stated \$4,980 for the year. New York Public Library, Oppenheim Papers, box 2.

<sup>17</sup> See Sharon Hamilton, 'Mencken and Nathan's *Smart Set* and the Story Behind Fitzgerald's Early Success', *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* (2005), pp. 20-48.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Millington, *The Strange World of the Crossword* (London: M & J Hobbs, 1974), p. 11. The *New York World* also seems to have chosen its illustrators with flair: members of the Robert Henri circle (later Ashcan School or The Eight) Everett Shinn, George Luks, and William Glackens also worked there from 1898.

<sup>19</sup> *Camera Work* was published from 1903 to 1917 by Alfred Stieglitz, as representative of the theory and practice of the gallery "291" in Fifth Avenue. From about 1909 to 1910 it began to move away from the purely photographic, reflecting Stieglitz's increasing interest in modern art works; De Zayas' drawings are to be found in Caroline Caffin, *Vaudeville* (New York: Doubleday, 1913).

often still demonstrated a now ‘acceptable’ pictorialism.<sup>20</sup> Stieglitz’s focus of attention gradually moved beyond photography to modern experimental art for which his “291” gallery became well known. 291 featured a concrete poem by Guillaume Apollinaire which had previously appeared in Apollinaire’s own unconventional Paris publication, *Soirées De Paris* (1912-1914), a magazine which also influenced *The Soil*. European cultural production is also idealised as a model for *The Seven Arts* even while it calls for American revival; *The Pagan* displays a Russian or Eastern European influence particularly in its fiction, but, I would argue, is as much typically ‘American’ as the others.

*The Soil* printed an article by Charlie Chaplin containing facts that were already well-known to readers of popular papers such as *Motion Picture Magazine* and the recently launched, more generalist, slightly up-market ‘slick’, *Vanity Fair*.<sup>21</sup> Also included was an article by Annette Kellermann, the ‘artistic swimmer’, a description of whose then celebrated and popular act had however featured in a widely shown film, *Neptune’s Daughter* (1914) and she had recently featured in the very popular monthlies *Photoplay* and *Motion Picture Story*. Her picture had appeared in *Nash’s* (1912) and was shortly (1917) to appear in *Vanity Fair*. *The Soil* contained stories by Arthur Cravan which had already appeared in his own idiosyncratic review, *Maintenant* (1912-1915), published in Paris. *The Soil*’s editor, Robert Coady, sold first editions of Gertrude Stein’s *Three Lives* and limited edition copies of Max Jacob’s *Siege of Jerusalem* illustrated by Picasso, but also first editions of mid- and late-nineteenth-century novels and for special interest, current copies of *The Engineering Magazine* and *The Boxing Record*.<sup>22</sup> Innovative poetry by Wallace Stevens appeared, but the first periodical to publish Stevens was Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry*, the little magazine begun in Chicago in 1912 which, almost a century later, is still in publication, and now a literary institution.<sup>23</sup> Some of *The Pagan*’s opinions

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<sup>20</sup> This had, nevertheless, still been regarded as *avant-garde* at the time Stieglitz initiated the *Photo-Secession* group in 1902.

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com/articles.php?cid=58&get=2>: Ivan Gaddis, ‘Oh, If We Had Charlie Chaplin’s Salary’ *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1916; ‘The Screen As A Marriage Promoter’, *Vanity Fair* (December 1916), p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Stein remembered Coady in a remarkable piece beginning: ‘As I knew you, and at once as I knew you, Coady and Brenner as I knew and at once and as I knew you, there was this reason for it.’ Stein, ‘My Dear Coady and Brenner’, *Painted Lace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 291.

<sup>23</sup> *Poetry* until recently had an unfair reputation as a reactionary forum, propagated particularly by Ezra Pound in his 1930 article for *The English Journal*. For this and other details see John Timmerman

correspond with those expressed in Emma Goldman's anarchist journal *Mother Earth* (1906-1916); *The Pagan* aligned itself explicitly with *The Little Review* and with *The Masses* (1911-1917), a magazine of literature and socialism. This comparison is revisited in chapter 4.<sup>24</sup>

The brief survey above is, of course, not at all comprehensive. It excludes most newspapers, but it does include examples of most of the kinds of periodicals available on the American market at the time. Illustrating these connections and overlaps between periodicals continues to make it difficult to categorise them as 'little', 'big', 'modernist', 'traditional' or 'establishment'. It is easier to think of the whole periodical field as important to the wider implications of modernism, with minority-edited, avowedly 'non-commercial' magazines as just part of the field. Because of their individuality, their coterie position, sometimes their disregard of censorship restrictions, and perhaps also because of the cultural and commercial influence of their backers, the small independent magazines have had a disproportionately large effect on the construction of the modernist canon.<sup>25</sup> The canon in itself is in constant process of expansion and moderation as it becomes more and more apparent that a stylistic 'high modernism' in the previously-accepted sense is not the only indication of the response, by artists, to the conditions of modern society. The reasons for the general growth of periodical production at the time are themselves connected to changing conditions of modernity: the development of technology and the shift in the United States from an agrarian to an industrial economy, the development of new and cheaper methods of reproduction for both printed matter and pictures, the growth of advertising, and the expansion of the American middle class. These conditions are amply detailed in Theodore Peterson's seminal work of 1956, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>26</sup>

### *Classifications, Collections and Bibliographies*

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Newcomb, 'Poetry's Opening Door: Harriet Monroe and American Modernism' in McKible and Churchill, *Little Magazines & Modernism*.

<sup>24</sup> *The Masses* (New York) 1911-1917, a radical magazine edited for a short time by Piet Vlag then for the remainder of the period by Max Eastman.

<sup>25</sup> The magazine which is the most notorious for its censorship trial is *The Little Review*, which chose to serialise Joyce's *Ulysses* and was successfully defended by art collector, lawyer, and connoisseur John Quinn.

<sup>26</sup> Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1956), Ch. 1, 'The Birth of the Magazine'.



To pursue the different strains of heredity, to separate the tangled criss-cross of influences, when the subject is not even as dependably concrete as a man, but only one of the more elusive and insubstantial of man's expressions, is a pretty nearly hopeless task.<sup>27</sup>

It is, then, a significant fact that almost every thesis, critical work, or article on the subject of little magazines attempts the task that William Troy pronounced 'nearly hopeless' as far back as 1930. Even before the turn of the twentieth century an enormous number of such 'elusive and insubstantial' publications, large and small, Romantic and Modern, reactionary and radical, had been incorporated as part of the fabric of literary and critical studies. Sustained enquiry or bibliography has often attempted some kind of classification of a field which is, as Troy's remark indicates, almost unclassifiable. To rank magazines in importance in terms of the authors whom they publish is useful but inconclusive, as will become apparent; to group them according to their editorial principles is useful largely as a springboard for discussion. With this idea in mind what follows is an examination of some of the major bibliographies through the relevant decades, and examples of the body of critical work of which this discussion will form a small part. While the magazines in this thesis are intentionally chosen from a small geographical locality in the United States, their cultural frame of reference is transatlantic, as are some of the sources of their criticism and classification. For brevity and relevance, however, the examples cited below are predominantly American.

Within the period approximately 1890-1910, a vastly expanded field of production of periodicals of all kinds had become possible and available. Near the beginning of the twentieth century, Frederick Winthrop Faxon noted, for the *Boston Bulletin of Bibliography*, the influence of 'the small, artistically printed periodicals variously called Chap-Books, Ephemerals, Bibelots, Brownie Magazines, Fadazines, Magazettes, Freak Magazines', and compiled one of the earliest examples of a little magazine bibliography.<sup>28</sup> The proliferation of magazines which were themselves products of the new American industrialism, was one form of celebration of the endless potential within modern society. At the beginning of the 1930s, William Carlos Williams chose to publish an early bibliography spread over three issues of his

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<sup>27</sup> William Troy, 'The Story of Little Magazines', *Bookman* 70.5 (January 1930), p. 481, quoted in Churchill and McKible, *Little Magazines & Modernism*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Frederick Winthrop Faxon, "Ephemeral Bibelots": *A Bibliography of Modern Chap-Books and Their Imitators* (Boston: Boston Book Company, 1903), p.3.

re-launched *Contact* magazine. Supplied largely by his readers, and sometimes inaccurately-dated, this was a reasonably comprehensive list of small independent magazines, produced over the previous thirty years.<sup>29</sup> The 1940s saw the publication of one of the best-known bibliographies, still in many ways regarded as the most comprehensive of its time. Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich's *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography*, published in America in 1946, lists American and British publications between the years 1895 and 1945.<sup>30</sup> It is in many ways definitive: it was published closest to the period in which modernism is now commonly held to have flourished; it contains (uniquely for its time) a number of critical chapters as well as a chronological bibliography. Apart from Hoffman, there are few works which document the small publications of the period under discussion in any way comprehensively, and it is often still cited as an authoritative source.

There are of course drawbacks to the use of Hoffman and the particular critical position that it offers. First, although it acknowledges the difficulty involved in classification, it nevertheless attempts both classification and generalisation. Second, whether intentionally or not, the classification appears hierarchical. Hoffman's bibliographic entries sometimes read like value judgements on magazines which have subsequently become rare; it is all too easy to assume objective validity in these judgements. Its immediately post-war publication could arguably have added credibility and resonance to the war-inflected vocabulary surrounding the idea of the *avant-garde*. Hoffman also appears to support the belief that all independent magazines are by definition revolutionary, groundbreaking, or opposed to the dominant culture. They do often express opposition, but one could question whether this was always on the side of advancement. Then again, one could also interrogate extensively the concepts of 'progress' and 'stagnation' themselves as applied to the fields of literature and art. Nevertheless, almost by default, and because there are so very few comprehensive critical works from this vital period of American modernism, Hoffman's work is still used as a primary source, possibly also for the practical reason

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<sup>29</sup> David Moss, 'A Bibliography of the Little Magazine Published in America Since 1900', *Contact: An American Quarterly Review* 1.1 (February 1932), pp. 91-109, 2.1 (May 1932), pp. 111-124, 3.1 (July 1932), pp. 134-139.

<sup>30</sup> Frederick Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), referred to in the text hereafter as 'Hoffman'.

that it is moderately wide-ranging but still a manageable size compared to the enormous indexes now available.

The 1950s appear to show some decline of interest in American magazines as objects of critical attention, but an increase in the number of compiled indexes, for instance the *Index to Little Magazines* from the small Denver-based Alan Swallow press. This was produced in the form of facsimile typewritten pages, which lent it a localised, small-association appearance; in fact, it was published systematically and reissued through some twenty years between 1956 and 1976, with numerous additions and expansions, in four volumes covering magazine periods from 1890 onwards. As author-subject indexes these are invaluable to anyone who wishes to trace the publication history of a particular author; they are not, however, and not intended to be, indicators of the character or editorial quality of any particular magazine. The next decade, the 1960s, shows a small number of bibliographic publications, and in addition some important critical work which will be outlined in the next section. The Denver indexes, which by this time contained brief details of thousands of magazines, were still in print. A key event in 1967 was the re-issue of 104 titles by the Kraus Reprint Organisation, making facsimile copies of complete runs of certain magazines very readily available. The list includes an eclectic cross-section of periodicals including the one-issue *Fire!!* (1926), the long-running *Poetry*, the staid *Poetry Journal*, *Penguin New Writing* (issued by a major publisher), *Contact* (all three separate runs), *Critical Quarterly*, *Pagany*, and *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 'each selected for the unique role it played in contemporary literature and criticism'.<sup>31</sup> While the editors give no further indication of how and why those particular selections were made, their availability has perhaps helped to confirm the critical privileging of certain magazines over others. These reprints excluded, for the most part, all the surrounding cultural material, covers, and advertising, explicitly considered expendable by those editors but more recently held, by a number of scholars, to be of great importance to the kind of whole-issue, interrelated approach taken in this thesis.

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<sup>31</sup> See *The Little Magazines: Announcing the Reprinting of 104 Avant-Garde Magazines, Including 37 New Listings* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1967), and *19 Little Magazines in the English Language: Including a List of Available Little Magazines: In Reprint* (Nendeln, Lichtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1970).

Frank Luther Mott's four-volume *History of American Magazines* was republished in 1968, with a fifth volume, 'The Twentieth Century', having been collected together and added posthumously.<sup>32</sup> Although it largely concentrates on established, mid-circulation magazines such as *The Smart Set* (1900-1930) and its successor *The American Mercury* (1924-1981), Mott's work also includes essays on *The Fugitive* (1921-1924), *The Little Review* (1914-1929), and Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* (1912-present). Absent from Mott's unfinished final volume is any rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of particular publications. *Poetry* and *The Little Review*, for instance, were almost on opposing sides of the publishing-ethics fence, but both are included among essays on much larger-circulation magazines. In the same decade that culminated in Mott's work, there also appears to have been a marked increase in the number of discursive and critical studies of individual magazines, examples of which are highlighted in the short summary which follows at the end of this section.

By the 1970s the territory of the radical protest had clearly expanded. In 1978 *TriQuarterly*, essentially a university journal, published a significant issue devoted to little magazines, entitled *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History*. Conceived as a 'companion volume' to the 1946 Hoffman (which its editors regarded as definitive) but 'with a sense of the living reality of the publications,' it is a collection of interviews, recollections and essays by the editors of a broad variety of magazines. Though the work mostly concerns publications from the 1950s and beyond, lengthy discussions are included about the function and definition of little magazines, 'all failing business propositions'.<sup>33</sup> The *TriQuarterly* issue builds on the idea that being impoverished is one of the defining features of a 'little' magazine, and thus many of the articles in that issue address the commercial issues surrounding publication. Each magazine is also definitively positioned against its surrounding academic culture. By the end of the decade a nine-volume bibliography was also completed: Sader's *Comprehensive Index to Little Magazines 1890-1970* (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organisation Limited, 1976). This author-based work of research conducted by Felix Pollak appears very scholarly but omits certain magazines: under the entry for Hart Crane, for instance, the magazines *Double-Dealer*

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<sup>32</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: Volume 5: Sketches of 21 Magazines 1905-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1968).

<sup>33</sup> Michael Anania, 'Of Living Belfry and Rampart: On American Literary Magazines Since 1950', *TriQuarterly* 43 (Fall 1978), (Evanston: Northwestern University), p.18.

and *Twice-a-Year* are listed, but *The Pagan*, where Crane's poetry first appeared in 1918, is omitted despite the fact that Hoffman had already documented this first appearance. What this demonstrates is less the inadequacy of the volume than the impossibility of the task, on conventional printed media, within such a large date range. Len Fulton's yearly directories of little magazines currently in print began in 1964 with a pamphlet-sized 'Directory of Little Magazines' containing only the most basic information about each publication. Fulton's publishing house developed through his own work as founder and editor of the magazine *Dust* between 1964 and 1971. His own article in *TriQuarterly* includes a picture of the front cover of the 1971 edition of his *Directory of Little Magazines, Small Presses, & Underground Newspapers*, itself definitely part of a thriving 'underground' press, but after thirty-five years the most recent edition is a glossy paper volume looking extremely establishment and businesslike both outside and inside.<sup>34</sup> There are larger directories: *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, begun in 1932 by the same Caroline Ulrich who co-wrote *Little Magazines*, is now in its 39<sup>th</sup> edition, a massively comprehensive four-volume work invaluable to librarians and bibliographers of all disciplines.

Inclusion or exclusion of an item in a bibliography has not only enormous implications for research but also for the future shape of the canon; it is possible that the magazines which we now see as crucial to the course and direction of American modernism are not necessarily the best but only the most available or the most accessible. Hoffman includes many magazines which 'for one reason or another, do not answer strictly to the definition of the little magazine' in a 'supplementary list' at the back of the book. Included are such radically different magazines as *Camera Work*, *The Smart Set*, Eliot's *Criterion*, *Theatre Arts Magazine*, Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*, and *291*, but not *The Dial*.<sup>35</sup> Edward Chielens' *American Literary Magazines: The Twentieth Century* (1986) also relegates certain magazines, including *The Soil*, *The Pagan*, and *Mother Earth*, to a list of also-rans at the back; this kind of evaluative grouping, and briefly judgemental statements such as those of Allen and Pollak seem as much to indicate the opinions of the bibliographer as the relative importance of the

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<sup>34</sup> See Len Fulton, 'Dust: A Tribal Seed', *TriQuarterly* 43 as above: 423-438, and Fulton's *International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses* (1973- ).

<sup>35</sup> See Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, 'Supplementary List', pp. 370-398.

magazines, but they have a disproportionate effect on future bibliographies and critical collections.<sup>36</sup>

Present day improvements in connective digital technology have enabled remarkable progress to be made in compiling edited bibliographies, documenting magazines, and making copies publicly available. Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker's *Modernist Magazines Project*, based at De Montfort University is a major example. It is continually taking shape as a fully interactive, editable, permanent web-based resource with the ability to cross-reference a vast and increasing database of magazine entries and articles by author, by date, and by magazine title.<sup>37</sup> It is nominally limited to 'modernist' magazines but one of its important functions is to question and extend what were (until recently) received notions of modernism as formal, stylistic, academic, and often conservative. Instead it tends towards a periodic and geographic understanding of the term, which is illustrated by the extremely wide range of magazines documented. As a part of that project, this thesis attempts a similar wide-ranging view. The magazine database is accompanied by a three-volume printed *History of Modernist Magazines*, a more sustained and comprehensive selection of twentieth-century modernist magazine criticism than has hitherto been available on either side of the Atlantic. A rather different approach has been taken by the *Modernist Journals Project* of Brown University, which offers a more restricted dataset of periodicals with a cut-off date of 1922 but with a number of magazines, and also some seminal critical works, reproduced in their entirety. In both projects, contributions from a wide range of academics are encouraged, resulting in critical studies relating to an enormous fund of previously rarely available or unexamined material. There are also several other useful, but less comprehensive, internet sites, full details of which can be found in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

The idea of any kind of classification or definition appears, then, at the very least problematic and sometimes subjective; we cannot, especially, read a magazine in

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<sup>36</sup> Edward Chielens, *American Literary Magazines: The Twentieth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), Appendix A: 'Minor Literary Magazines' pp. 397-409. Lawrence Rainey has also pointed out that economic constraints can affect the contents of an edited collection, and the possible future effects of this, in an unpublished paper in the London Modernism Seminar Series, University of London (2 May 2006).

<sup>37</sup> This Ph.D. is submitted within the framework of this AHRC-funded project.

isolation when it is part of a comprehensive written climate of opinion which, as the main forum for intellectual debate, defines, and historicises, the *zeitgeist* of its time.

### *Critical Studies of Magazines*

In 1955, Malcolm Bradbury produced a long M.A. dissertation entitled 'Literary periodicals and little reviews, and their relation to modern English literature, 1900-1950', and Bradbury clearly built on this work in his subsequent approach to modernism in the 1960s.<sup>38</sup> The M.A. is an ambitious project running to almost 100,000 words, and though unpublished it has perhaps been crucial to the current critical understanding of how periodicals contribute to literary modernism. This early work relies on Hoffman's idea of a 'little magazine' and also assumes that it is 'the knowledge that ... serious writing is for the minority, a poor commercial risk, that brings about the existence of literary magazines' and it addresses an enormous number of small publications.<sup>39</sup> It illustrates very well the transatlantic nature of the early modernist ventures: Bradbury notes that writers such as Pound, Eliot, Harriet Shaw Weaver, and Dora Marsden make *The Egoist*, for example, a key document of transatlantic modernism. Bradbury's thesis, as primarily literary, privileges the presence of certain authors over others.

Since the 1950s, literary criticism has often focused on individual magazines. I confine myself here to examples of full-length studies, key works on the genesis, history, and critical significance of named periodicals. William Wasserstrom's *The Time of The Dial* (1963) and Nicolas Joost's works *Scofield Thayer and The Dial: An Illustrated History* (1964) and *Years of Transition: The Dial 1912-1920* (1967) are excellent examples and meticulously researched. Since the publication of these, one might pick out a number of equally interesting critical histories of single magazines: Margaret Anderson's early book *My Thirty Years' War* (1930) is autobiographical, but largely a history of *The Little Review* written immediately subsequent to its

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<sup>38</sup> See Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, *Modernism: 1890-1930* (London: Penguin, 1976), particularly 'Movements, Magazines and Manifestos: The Succession from Naturalism'.

<sup>39</sup> Bradbury, 'Literary Periodicals and Literary Reviews and Their Relation to Modern English Literature, 1900-1950', unpublished M.A. thesis (London: Queen Mary College, London University, 1955).

demise. Also notable are Paul Stewart's *Prairie Schooner Story* (1955), Susan Turner's *History of The Freeman* (1963), Stephen Halpert's *A Return to Pagany* on William Carlos Williams' *Pagany* (1969), Leslie Fishbein's *Rebels In Bohemia: The Radicals of The Masses* (1982), Jason Harding's work *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (2002) and Suzanne Churchill's *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of Modern Poetry* (2006).

Innovative work has also begun which foregrounds the material culture of magazines and the canonical effects of commercial or marketing strategies, instanced by Mark Morrisson's *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905-1920*, McKible and Churchill's essential collection *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches*, or Lawrence Rainey's work in *Institutions of Modernism* on the machinations behind *The Dial*'s acquisition of Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. Andrew Thacker has examined the detailed effects and character of advertisements using examples from various named magazines (*Rhythm, Palms, Coterie*). Some mid-twentieth-century Ph.D. theses such as those by Charles Silet and Claire Sacks on *The Seven Arts*, Douglas Clayton's 'Literary Radicals: A History of the "Seven Arts" and Its Critics' and more recently Eric White's work on William Carlos Williams and *Contact*, and Jonathan Sanders' work on Mike Gold, *The Masses*, and *The Liberator* illustrate a number of different approaches, though their approach differs from that of this author in that they still largely approach a magazine via its personnel rather than via its textual constitution.<sup>40</sup> Recent work questions that

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<sup>40</sup> Nicholas Joost, *Scofield Thayer and The Dial: An Illustrated History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), and *Years of Transition: The Dial 1912-1920* (Barre: Barre Publishers, 1967); William Wasserstrom, *The Time of The Dial* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963); Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years' War* (New York: Knopf, 1930); Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of The Masses 1911-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Stephen Halpert, *A Return to Pagany: The History, Correspondence, and Selections from a Little Magazine 1929-1932* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Paul Stewart, *The Prairie Schooner Story: A Little Magazine's First 25 years* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1955); Susan Turner, *A History of The Freeman: Literary Landmark of the Early Twenties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Suzanne Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of American Poetry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001); McKible and Churchill, *Little Magazines & Modernism*; Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998); Andrew Thacker, 'Coterie: Un "Mélange Sans Grande Cohérence Éditoriale"?' in *Revue Modernistes Anglo Américaines: Lieux d'Échanges, Lieux d'Exil* (Paris: Ent'revues, 2006); Thacker, 'Modern Tastes: Visual and Verbal Advertising in Modernist Reviews' (Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008); Charles L. P. Silet, 'The Seven Arts: The Artist and the Community' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Indiana, 1973); Claire Sacks, 'The Seven Arts



approach, which also inevitably tends to contribute to the ranking of publications in order of literary importance. Also relevant here are the works of George Bornstein and Robert Scholes, following Peterson's much earlier lead, on print and advertising culture, and comprehensive work by Ann Ardis, Patrick Collier, and Adam McKible.<sup>41</sup>

This section, then, has been a brief description of the critical field in which this thesis belongs, which ranges from the purely business and commercial directory through to the ideologically critical bibliography. If we are to talk at all about commerce between publications, or about dialogism between publications, all of these different kinds of products have to be taken into account as occupying positions in the critical field; 'the little review' as labelled by Bourdieu, thus unpacked and expanded, is therefore far from a clear-cut category.

### *Definitions and Classifications: Methodology*

A little magazine is *not merely a passive background or blank page for a modernist text*; its contents, covers, paper quality, illustrations and prints, advertisements, manifestos, and editorials shape the meaning and reception of a text.<sup>42</sup>

Accepting Churchill's statement, the following chapters take a holistic approach to a magazine, including sometimes a comparative view of editorials, advertisements, and creative content. The language attempts to be non-evaluative, since some of the significant effect of these documents resides in the energy borne of the inevitably uneven quality and sometimes bizarre variety of their contents. Furthermore, without new and more sustained investigations, certain magazines important in their day might be obscured or neglected in favour of those with more celebrated 'back' stories such as *The Little Review*, or the appearance in their pages of vociferous writers such as Ezra Pound or William Carlos Williams, who have become key markers in a vertical, historical construction of transatlantic modernism. Other modern critical

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Critics: A Study of Cultural Nationalism in America 1910-1930' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Milwaukee, 1955); Douglas J. Clayton, 'Literary Radicals: A History of the "Seven Arts" and its Critics' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Northwestern University, 1989); Jonathan Sanders, 'Mike Gold and Proletarian Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005); Eric White, 'William Carlos Williams and *Contact*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>41</sup> Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier, *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); Patrick Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Churchill, *The Little Magazine* Others, p. 9, my italics.

approaches involve the wider definition of a 'little' magazine, and the difficulty of classification. Malcolm Cowley's idea of shrinking magazines due to financial decline has until recently been assumed almost axiomatic as a guide to which magazines are included in the general category of 'little'. It has behind it something of the Romantic picture of the dedicated artist starving in a garret, his tiny hand more and more frozen:

The first issue consists, let us say, of sixty-four pages, with half-tone illustrations printed on coated paper. The second issue has sixty-four pages, illustrated with line cuts. The third has only forty-eight pages; the fourth has thirty-two, without illustrations; the fifth never appears.<sup>43</sup>

Almost every critical work and every bibliography concerning periodicals attempts to define that body of work which constitutes 'little' magazines. Beginning with Moss's *Contact* bibliography described above, the third issue carried an article entitled 'The Advance Guard Magazine' written by Williams himself. With this article, Williams is at pains to distinguish between the writing in a mainstream magazine and the 'more advanced' sort of writing which is 'confined to books, occasional pamphlets and the non-commercial periodicals'.<sup>44</sup> He therefore brings to the fore the distinction between the commercial and the non-commercial made so prominently in so many studies; nevertheless in this second and comparatively well-produced, materially solid short-run edition of his magazine (1932), he prints the work of S. J. Perelman, a gifted humorist who had written, by then, two Hollywood scripts (for the Marx Brothers, in 1931 and 1932) and who for two years had regularly published items in the wide-circulation, commercially successful *New Yorker*.<sup>45</sup> But the distinction between the commercial and the artistic or idealistic publication becomes blurred in relation to all the magazines in this detailed study.

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<sup>43</sup> Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* [1934] (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 188.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, 'The Advance Guard Magazine', *Contact: An American Quarterly Review* 1.1 (February 1932), p. 86.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Owen Johnson, *An Index to Literature in The New Yorker: Volumes I-XV, 1925-1940* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1969). The author Nathanael West, however (close friend and eventually brother-in-law to S. J. Perelman) was an associate editor of *Contact*.

‘A pretty essay might be written’ continues Williams, ‘on the subject of the “small magazine” and its significance in America during the past thirty years.’<sup>46</sup> Whether or not Williams knew that this had already been attempted and was being mildly ironic is hard to guess. Ezra Pound’s article “Small Magazines” had nevertheless appeared, in the rather staid *English Journal*, two years before.<sup>47</sup> Here Pound, though his article is heavily self-interested, attempts a more detailed definition. He puts forward the necessity of a ‘program’ (or manifesto) arrived at by an editorial group: ‘where there is not the binding force of some kind of agreement ... it seems improbable that the need of a periodical really exists.’<sup>48</sup> Indeed, much of Pound’s career up to that point had involved arguing with, or publicly criticising, the dominant editorial group in each of the large number of magazines to which he had been a contributor. For a number of magazines his statement is simply untrue; Bruno’s magazines were as much a part of New York modern culture as any minority publication of the era, but there is no evidence of their having been produced as any kind of consensual group effort. This is also largely true of *The Pagan*, despite the presence of various names on the ‘editors’ list every month, and also true of *The Soil*. The concept of the manifesto as a defining characteristic of modernist periodicals has been addressed comprehensively, and although not all the small magazines of the period Pound addressed announce their intentions in a list like *Blast*, only a minority of magazines do not announce their reason for existence in some editorial form or other.<sup>49</sup>

This leads me back to the main theme of commerce: it can of course be argued that any such announcement is equivalent to targeting a market niche, or even to creating a market. The relationship between, for instance, *Vanity Fair* and the left-wing, minority-circulation *Masses*, as expounded by Mark Morrisson, suggests that small magazines as a whole created a readership within a ‘counterpublic sphere’ largely by using similar commercial tactics to the larger magazines.<sup>50</sup> Kevin Dettmar and

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<sup>46</sup> *Contact*, as above, p. 86.

<sup>47</sup> Ezra Pound, ‘Small Magazines’, *The English Journal* 19.9 (November 1930), pp. 689-704.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 703.

<sup>49</sup> On manifestos: Malcolm Bradbury and James MacFarlane, *Modernism* Ch. 5: ‘Movements, Magazines, and Manifestos’; Kolocotroni, V., Goldman, J., and Taxisidou, O., *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), Ch. Ibis, ‘Manifestos’, pp. 249-315; and *Breaking The Rules: The Printed Face of the European Avant-Garde 1900-1937*, Ch. 2, ‘The Manifesto’ (London: British Library 2007), pp. 14-26; Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, And The Avant-Gardes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> The phrase ‘counterpublic’ originates with Habermas but has been adopted by a number of recent scholars, particularly in the context of social criticism and the politics of exclusion. In *The Public Face*

Stephen Watt, Joyce Wexler, and Lawrence Rainey show how a number of modernists were thoroughly attuned to material self-promotion.<sup>51</sup> While intellectual idealism professed to disparage commercial motivation, the intellectual reality shows a different picture.<sup>52</sup> Both Pound's manifesto definition and Williams' primary requisites for what can be called a 'little magazine' can therefore be interrogated.

William Carlos Williams was interested throughout his writing life in the 'permanent and necessary means of expression' provided by the small magazine which, he felt 'carries the battle forward.'<sup>53</sup> Hoffman's 1946 definition adds more to these criteria. The little magazine 'stood, from 1912 onwards, defiantly in the front ranks of the battle for mature literature'.<sup>54</sup> 'Many editors', suggests Hoffman, 'contend that "advance guard" is a better name for their magazines than "little" ... What the word designated above everything else was a limited group of intelligent readers'. Hoffman does not here question his own use of 'intelligent', which might mean that people who understand the work of little magazines must have accrued sufficient cultural capital (in Bourdieu's terminology) to appreciate the artistically adventurous and complex. Did he, then, include those in opposition as well as supporters? Hoffman goes on to assert that the 'commercial publishers – the large publishing houses and the big "quality" magazines – are the rear guard.'<sup>55</sup> To support this view the book relies on a 1943 article by Charles Allen (one of the co-authors) who claims therein that commercial magazines have only sponsored about twenty per cent of all new writers

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of *Modernism* Mark Morrisson uses the term in an argument which describes the way that Modernism constructed itself in opposition to the dominant public group, but used similar marketing methods.

<sup>51</sup> Morrisson, *Public Face of Modernism*; Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*; Kevin Dettmar and Stephen Watt, *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, and Re-Reading* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Joyce Wexler, *Who Paid for Modernism? Art, Money, and the Fiction of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997). Also see Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Verso, 1996).

<sup>52</sup> Gertrude Stein's capacity for self-publicity has however been noted for some time: a recent work by Karen Leick provides a comprehensive examination of the completely unsegregated variety of publications in which criticism or parody of her work appeared over thirty years: Leick, *Gertrude Stein and the Making of An American Celebrity* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> William Carlos Williams, "It carries the battle forward": An Unpublished Letter from William Carlos Williams to Edwin J. Becker, 'prisoner-poet', ed. by Todd Giles, *William Carlos Williams Review* 27.1 (Spring 2007), pp. 71-73.

<sup>54</sup> Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, p. 1. The idea of a 'mature' literature, implying progress and growth, is also an interesting one and it is interesting that this exact phrase reappears later in the Kraus Reprints catalogue for 1967. Joel Spingarn questioned the idea of 'progress' and 'evolution' as long ago as 1911, in his lecture *The New Criticism*. 'We have done with the "evolution" of Literature' he remarks. (Spingarn: *The New Criticism* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1911), p. 32), a view more in line with that of 291 rather than *The Seven Arts*.

<sup>55</sup> Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, p.3.

since 1912. Allen also claims in the same article that '[a]ny periodical whose motivating purpose is first of all to present artistic work by unknown or relatively unknown writers may be called a little magazine.'<sup>56</sup> Hoffman adds further that the commercial magazines 'have done nothing to initiate the new literary groups', a questionable polemic which instigates, for these editors, a useful but inaccurate dividing line between their chosen magazines and the larger ones. Allen's position is limited; in his definition *The Seven Arts* would not fall into the little magazine category: apart from one or two, its authors were in the main not unknown and more than one was already well established in wider-circulation magazines. Furthermore Allen cites *The Masses* of Floyd Dell and Max Eastman as 'a rebel literary magazine' where in fact their rebellion was more political than literary, and subsequent critics have remarked on the un-experimental nature of much of the *Masses* poetry and fiction.<sup>57</sup> Allen supports his idea with an interesting table of one hundred authors whom he has interviewed or from whom he has collected a questionnaire. The authors' recollections sometimes appear, however, to be anecdotal.<sup>58</sup>

Hoffman's view appears, therefore, oversimplified. While certain authors did indeed only appear in small magazines, the majority appeared simultaneously in a variety of other publications. It may, however, be true that for some authors, their work in popular weeklies helped to finance more experimental or unusual or risqué work which they gave for nothing to magazines such as *The Little Review*, *Others*, and *The Pagan*. Cyrena Pondrom, whose PhD thesis (1965) 'English Literary Periodicals' is essentially a bibliography with commentary, states definitively that 'advance-guard little magazines ... perform the following functions: publish able new writers, produce a ferment of ideas, judge work by literary standards and thus shield the writer from commercial or social demands, extend the audience for good work, provide a place for untrammelled experiment, and offer the writer a literary milieu and an audience.'<sup>59</sup> It

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<sup>56</sup> Allen, Charles, 'The Advance Guard: A Study of the "Little Magazines" From 1912 to the Present', *Sewanee Review* 51 (1943), pp. 410-429, p. 411.

<sup>57</sup> Rebecca Zurier, for instance: see Zurier, *Art For The Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics 1911-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), p. 161.

<sup>58</sup> There is no way of knowing, for instance, why Hart Crane is listed as having first published in *Bruno's Bohemia* for 1922 or Louis Zukofsky for *The Dial* in 1928; both were published much earlier in *The Pagan*, which suggests that either they do not want to draw attention to this early publication or that they have simply forgotten. Either way, this casts doubt on the reliability of such a table.

<sup>59</sup> Cyrena Pondrom, 'English Literary Periodicals: 1885-1918' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1965, p.1).

is a debatable point whether a writer would prefer, if she or he could, to be published in large-circulation journals and thus not be quite so shielded. Further, like many others of the time, the magazines under discussion here, apart from *The Seven Arts* (which had planned to expand later to include art as well as literature), are not purely ‘literary’; one of their interesting features, as indicated earlier, is their interdisciplinarity and how what might be called the media mix of their content contributes to each magazine as a composite object.

Hoffman discusses periodicals and reviews under various wide-ranging chapter headings: verse magazines such as Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry*, Alfred Kreymborg’s *The Glebe* (1913-14) and *Others* (1915-19); literary and literary critical magazines such as Margaret Anderson’s *The Little Review*, and those which the authors call “tendenz” magazines under which heading they include *The Seven Arts* and later *Broom*, *S4N*, and *The Frontier* (1920-1939). The authors also distinguish ‘politically’-oriented magazines (by which they mean left-wing or socialist) such as *The Masses* (1911-1917) and its successors *The Liberator* (1918-1924) and *The New Masses* (1926-1948), *The Modern Quarterly* (1923-1940), and *Front* (1930-1931). Given the frequent interconnections between writers, editors, publishers, and contributors in all these different kinds of publication, it seems that this kind of classification, as suggested, is unlikely to be at all precise, but it is a persistent idea.<sup>60</sup> *The Dial*, for instance, has been convincingly portrayed as crucial to the dominant ideas of the ‘American Resurgence’ of 1910-1920 and also as a background to the ideas of the extraordinary Alfred Stieglitz.<sup>61</sup> The fact that publications as different as Stieglitz and De Zayas’ *291*, Marcel Duchamp’s *The Blind Man*, and *The Seven Arts* can all be shown to have a link with the establishment *Dial* of the early second decade lends

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<sup>60</sup> In *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc, 1961) Daniel Aaron, documenting the American literary scene in the early part of the twentieth century, makes a similar grouping: he subdivides not the magazines but ‘left-wing’ writers into four groups, and exemplifies them through their various publications. He identifies the group from *The Masses*, who, in his view, supported a socialist, worker-oriented line, but did not ‘subordinate their art to politics’ as later U.S. communist magazines attempted to do. He also identifies a group he calls ‘The Apostolic “student movement” or The Priests of Young America’, among whose organs he includes *The Seven Arts* (1916-1917), *The Nation* (1865-present), *The New Republic* (1914-present), and *The Dial*. He names ‘The Literary Experimenters’ in which he includes *Poetry* and *The Little Review*, and ‘The Journalistic Shockers’ which group he feels is primarily represented by *The Smart Set* (later *American Mercury*). He also lists ‘unclassifiabiles’ – writers like Sherwood Anderson, Vachel Lindsay, and Carl Van Vechten who he sees as moving indiscriminately from one publication and opinion to another, though realistically this must be the position of many who live by the pen.

<sup>61</sup> Nicholas Joost, *Years of Transition: The Dial, 1912-1920* (Barre: Barre Publishers, 1967).

doubt to the idea of a clear dividing line between the avant-garde journal, the ‘little’ magazine and the regularly appearing critical periodical. Again, the line art in two magazines as different as *291* and *The Pagan* can be shown to be influenced by the anarchist principles taught by Robert Henri.<sup>62</sup> Another example is *The Dial* of the pre-Thayer years, called by E. E. Cummings a ‘dogooding periodical’, which nevertheless in 1914 featured Conrad Aiken, a poet considered central to the development of American modernism, as a managing editor.<sup>63</sup> Early appearances of Aiken’s poetry can also be spotted, however, in the rather more conservative *Poetry Review of America* (1916-1917), produced in Boston by African-American editor William Stanley Braithwaite.<sup>64</sup> There is little in most histories or bibliographies to suggest that a considerable number of ‘little’ magazines were so because they had a definite message or manifesto, but of a reactionary kind. One such, *The Unpopular Review*, edited by Henry Holt (reputedly one of the more adventurous new publishers of the time), has a supposedly humorous title that belies its rather turgid, ultra-conservative content.<sup>65</sup>

Other definitions have followed from Allen, via Hoffman. One of the most recent is that of Churchill and McKible (2007) who quote Troy, as cited at the beginning of this chapter. They remark on the difficulty, but produce a definition which essentially follows Hoffman, and their conclusion largely hinges on the paragraph which heads this chapter. In the end, therefore, definitions and classifications of the field are useful as a point of departure, and this paragraph stands as my own primary point of departure. Critics and historians can engage with the similarities and the differences between a magazine and its classification and it is the differences, the subversion of expectations, which make the study endlessly interesting, and which widen our insight

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<sup>62</sup> These are detailed in Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), Ch. 1-2, pp. 11-52.

<sup>63</sup> A note on Cummings’ initials: I have chosen to capitalise ‘E. E. Cummings’ following Norman Friedman, who having allowed a preface in a 1964 biography which stated that Cummings had his name legally changed, retracted this in 1992. See Friedman, *e. e. Cummings: The Growth of a Writer* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), preface by Harry T. Moore, and ‘Not “e. e. cummings”’, *Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society* [sic] 1 (1992), pp. 114-121.

<sup>64</sup> E. E. Cummings, in *Six NonLectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953, p. 50); Conrad Aiken, ‘Evensong’, *Poetry Review of America* 1.6, p. 87.

<sup>65</sup> *The Unpopular Review* was opposed to most modern verse: ‘Those who find most satisfaction in, and most frequently make use of, such phrases as ‘new manner,’ ‘free verse,’ ‘modern work’ are probably of no great significance in the drift and shifting of the age, movements that have little enough to do with technique.’ *Unpopular Review*, August 1916. Max Eastman, editor of the radical *The Masses*, however, also ran a lifelong crusade against what he called ‘lazy verse’ – see Chapter 1 on *The Seven Arts* herein.

into the diversity of the culture of newness in which the phenomenon we now call ‘modernism’ was produced.

The following section briefly summarises the approach taken in this thesis to each magazine, bearing in mind their position in the larger field, and also bringing to the fore the way that commerce is intrinsic to each argument. Subsequently some details are given of other correspondences between the magazines, geographical and chronological. A substantial summary of some of the implications of each argument is given later, in the final conclusion to this thesis.

### *The Seven Arts*

The ideological argument to which McKible and Churchill draw attention, the ‘vexed relationship to money’, is perhaps most directly addressed in the pages of *The Seven Arts*, and this is extensively examined in chapter 1. When the magazine was founded, the avowed reason for its inception was to print new work which represented the best of Young America, ‘young’ in these editors’ terms meaning new, or modern, and possibly twentieth rather than nineteenth century. The group was deeply influenced by the presence among them of Van Wyck Brooks. Brooks’ reputation later declined, largely due to his reaction against a ‘modernism’ which had by that time become largely understood as intellectual progress. But at the time, his essay collection *America’s Coming-of-Age* (1915) was critically acclaimed and much discussed.<sup>66</sup> In that collection, Brooks’ ideas revolved round the premise that artists and writers were hampered by a deep-seated need within American culture to prove themselves by making money. This need, went on Brooks, had the effect of dividing Americans unremittingly into intellectuals (highbrows) and commercial successes (lowbrows). According to Brooks (although he did not use the word ‘capitalist’), after leaving university a graduate was inevitably on the capitalist treadmill, and ‘he’ (women are, perhaps predictably, ignored throughout) was either too tired, too busy, or too money-driven to produce good art or even good ideas. *The Seven Arts* incorporates this notion into its featured essays and some of its editorials, but while Brooks actually states that society should be seeking some kind of compromise, the tendency in *The Seven Arts*

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<sup>66</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, *America’s Coming-of-Age* [1915] (New York: Doubleday, 1958), especially Ch. 1, “‘Highbrow” and “Lowbrow””, pp. 1-19.



and other small magazines was rather to support a type of ivory-tower artist who, nevertheless, must still somehow be total product of American society. The magazine thus also promotes a form of early regionalism by setting a recognisable Americanism as a criterion for criticism. Theodore Dreiser's essay 'Life, Art, and America' describes, extensively, the America of his childhood from which *The Seven Arts* writers would wish to distance themselves, so inhibited and constrained that it could not easily support authentic literary production. *The Seven Arts*' editorials called for an American renewal and flowering, while its reviews talked of 'emerging greatness' in the same specifically American context. *The Seven Arts* was the embodiment of an ethical and aesthetic ideal; it was funded entirely by a rich sponsor under a contract which stated that the content was to be entirely under the control of the editorial group. Finally, though, this happy arrangement had to come to an end. Under pressure of American participation in the war, the sponsor could not at last publicly support the group's pacifist convictions. The contract was not renewed and the magazine finished. Thus for a group who initially hoped that art could change politics, it was those very politics which put an end to this particular artistic endeavour.

## 291

In this context of commercial ethics, the magazine *291* is very significant as the site of an insoluble ideological aesthetic division, its own 'vexed relationship to money'. The magazine predates *The Seven Arts* by two years, and represents a different current of New York thinking, perhaps more obviously recognisable as 'avant-garde'. At first glance it is hardly comparable to *The Seven Arts*: primarily a magazine of art, rather than literature and opinion, it is large, lavish, experimental, and intentionally cosmopolitan. In a different critical context it can be shown, however, to have certain deep-rooted, long-term commercial aims in spite of its editor's profession of the opposite view, and that it is impossible to extricate it from these considerations. This is particularly true if, following Bourdieu, one recognises that the artist cannot necessarily be held as 'inspired' purely by a spiritually-constituted genius, but that her or his success is constituted and promoted by the socio-cultural environment. *291* was initially a product of Alfred Stieglitz's hallowed gallery-retreat "291", and it was well-known at the time that Stieglitz always spoke volubly against the idea of the

gallery being 'successful' in the sense of the more usual kind of art shop.<sup>67</sup> But *291* also acts as a concrete example of Bourdieu's idea of 'symbolic capital': while it professes to despise market trends, it also offers itself, partly via the inclusion of a strangely explicit pricing structure, as a long-term asset.<sup>68</sup>

Ultimately the rift between *291* and Stieglitz was documented by Stieglitz in *Camera Work* and it was a disagreement about the nature of commerce; the causes of this separation are detailed in Chapter 2. But the chapter goes beyond this in its treatment of commerce as it is actually designated in the magazine, in terms of a 'commerce of ideas', the phrase used by *291*'s editor. The commerce extends between the boundaries of different art forms and between European and American ideas, and to the intentional combination of different art forms in the pursuit of a 'scientific' aesthetic which was held by the editors to be one acknowledgement of a changing world.

### *The Soil*

*The Soil*, the subject of chapter 3, far from being (as in the view of Dickran Tashjian) a 'successor' to *291*, was diametrically opposed to it in its aesthetics and its ethics, and indeed explicitly within its text.<sup>69</sup> According to *The Soil*'s editor, commercial activity was not only fully imbricated in artistic production, it *was* artistic production. Its editor's idea, a kind of trade mark, was that American artists, to be authentic, should look to the products of modern America. Like the Futurists, Coady believed that machinery should be inherent to art (the factory and the steam hammer), but also included the tug boats then working on the East River, and the windows of Macy's department store. Unlike that of the Futurists, however, Coady's view of machinery is

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<sup>67</sup> On the 'sanctity' of 291 Fifth Avenue, see Paul Rosenfeld (writing as 'Peter Minuit'), "291 Fifth Avenue", *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), pp.61-66; for further information about Stieglitz's views on commerce see Francis Naumann, 'Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and his New York Galleries', *Artforum International* 39 (May 2001), pp. 173-174. Other references are given in chapter 2 of this thesis.

<sup>68</sup> See Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, p. 54: 'an anti-economy based on the refusal of commerce and 'the commercial' and, more precisely, on the renunciation of short-term economic profits ... and on recognition solely of *symbolic, long-term profits* (but which are ultimately reconvertible into economic profits)', also see Randal Johnson's succinct explanation of the terms which I cited earlier (page 11).

<sup>69</sup> Dickran Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives: Dada and the American Avant-Garde 1910-1925* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press), p. 71.

static rather than dynamic. While the Futurists praised speed, noise, destruction, and recombination, Coady extolled the classical beauty, clean lines, and fitness for purpose of a piece of heavy engineering or a steam engine, as illustrated in a photograph. On the surface his ideas express an attempt to collapse or extend the boundaries of art, and they have normally been interpreted this way. But his ideas can be shown nevertheless to incorporate the assumption of a traditional aesthetic, views which sometimes extended, in *The Soil*, to a condemnation of modernist artistic experiment. *The Soil* is, further, openly an advertisement both for the Coady Gallery and for the books which Coady had available for sale, and its business advancement was linked to knowing the 'right people'. Comparison of *The Soil* and *291* reveals them as sites of a fundamental ethical opposition, and a fascinating dialogic, or commerce. The 'art world' essentially turns on what customers will pay for a work of art, but at the same time art produced for money is critically branded as inferior, like 'best-seller' novels. *The Soil*, delighting in the serialisation of a dime novel, paradoxically interrogates the elitism of this view while remaining securely positioned within the 'Art World' which supported it.

### *The Pagan*

The last magazine in this group and the subject of Chapter 4, *The Pagan*, if it is known at all, it is for its poetry, and this is the first extended examination of this sometimes eloquent periodical whose output included some exceptional line drawings and woodcuts along with a large number of short stories and articles, some by authors who are now well known and some by authors who ought to be more widely known. Little is left to inform researchers of *The Pagan*'s originating administration or production, and it seems to have been just barely financed by the small publishing company owned by its editor. Based in a small bookshop in Washington Square, it was part of the Greenwich Village scene of the time, but without the rather glitzy, consciously 'bohemian' image that 'the Village' built up for itself. Radically left-wing, *The Pagan* is under no illusions about the nature of poverty, or about the inequalities which fuel corporate progress. Its editorials remark, cynically, the fashionable socialism of New York's 'Bohemia', and often contrast this with the working life of the Jewish east-side immigrant. It is significant that the editor of *The Pagan* chose also to print the work of many younger artists who were Jewish immigrants. The

magazine reminds us, above all, that the commercial success of the New York of the 1910s was dependent on the labour of millions of men, women, and children on starvation wages. It maintains a sometimes oppositional dialogue with *The Masses*. Besides this central critique of the workings of commerce in capitalist society, *The Pagan* also exemplifies ‘commerce’ in the sense of definition (2). *The Pagan* aligns itself with a number of other little magazines. Its social commerce with other magazines, its exchange of views and its significant arguments, its dialogism in fact, promotes modification of any view which presumes any homogeneity in the ‘radical’ viewpoint of the day. Through the lens of these central ideas, the chapter promotes a reconsideration of the importance of *The Pagan* in the context of literary and artistic modernism.

Overall, this thesis will attempt to amplify the connections and dialogism between the individual magazines and a larger picture schematised by Bourdieu (see page 10): that of the position of each magazine in relation to its field of cultural production.<sup>70</sup> At this point, however, we move from the magazines’ position in a broad socio-economic schema to their actual geographical position, a crucial contributory factor to their larger cultural placement.

### *Geographical and Chronological Correspondences*

By 1920, New York had become both the artistic and the commercial centre of American activity. It is therefore important for the purpose of this thesis that all four publications are New York based. Except for one they are not Greenwich Village magazines; they do not all necessarily display the influence of the bohemian intellectual *milieu* sponsored and directed by wealthy dilettantes, which is the general picture created by numerous and indeed fascinating books about the New York of that period.<sup>71</sup> *The Pagan*, the one whose site of production (Washington Square) is

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<sup>70</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge, Polity, 1993), p. 46.

<sup>71</sup> See a number of wide-ranging, colourful descriptions of this period, for example: Robert Crunden, *Body & Soul: The Making of American Modernism* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Ann Douglas, *A Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995); Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New*

geographically nearest to Greenwich Village, takes in some ways a more adversary stance than the others against the Village culture. The two magazines primarily associated with the 'art world', *291* and *The Soil*, were both produced from small art galleries half way up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, only twelve blocks apart. *The Seven Arts* office was situated further downtown on Madison Avenue. The magazines demonstrate ideological differences, while providing a mesh of ideas and cultural pointers which illustrate the prevalent intellectual diversity within this small area. They are a symptom of, and integral to, its increasing cultural importance, often held to have been consolidated during the 1920s. American writers and artists of the 1910s thus undertook a different kind of search for the new, in a spirit of rebellion and combat perhaps more complex and immediate than that of their British counterparts. American life had developed rapidly. Its technical advancement had been made possible partly by the enormous rise in immigration over the two decades either side of the turn of the twentieth century, supplying cheap labour to American entrepreneurs like Andrew Carnegie, steel magnate and military supplier, who invested heavily in, and made large profits from, the new technology of the time and turned (after the war) to philanthropy and art collecting.<sup>72</sup> The government of the day, and various liberal thinkers and cultural critics, placed an emphasis on the distinctive features of the American character: America was exploring anew its own identity. This exploratory approach was also evident in a literary and artistic output which, it was hoped, would single it out as a leading nation rather than as a backwash of imitative European culture.<sup>73</sup> Though the four magazines discussed in the following

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*Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000); Steven Watson, *Strange Bedfellows: The First American Avant-Garde* (New York: Abbeville, 1991). There are also contemporary accounts of Greenwich Village, for instance Djuna Barnes' *Greenwich Village As It Is* (first published in *Pearson's Magazine* in 1915, clearly for popular consumption), an attractively organic account including a detailed run-down of bars and cafés including the Brevoort and the Lafayette, which were certainly too costly for the majority of East Side residents. She mentions Guido Bruno, who was himself instrumental in mythologizing both his own persona and the life of the area in numerous magazines between 1915 and 1922, like *Bruno's Village*, *Bruno's Weekly*, *Bruno's Bohemia*, *Bruno's Chap-Book*, *Greenwich Village*, and *Bruno's Review*. Autobiographies and biographies of patrons of the arts like Mabel Dodge and Ottoline Morel also contribute to the body of mythology.

<sup>72</sup> For an account of Carnegie's commercial and industrial activities see Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1997). See also John Dos Passos' account of Carnegie in his semi-fictional masterpiece *USA* (New York: Modern Library, 1937), pp. 264-265.

<sup>73</sup> See (President) Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom: A Call for the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913) which reiterates American advancement in science, industry, and working life, and emphasises American identity. Within literary, critical, and artistic circles there was a plethora of similar idealistic writing, from Herbert Croly's *The Promise of American Life* (1909) to Waldo Frank's *Our America* (1919), and critical work such as Professor Joel Spingarn's *New Criticism* (1911).

pages are very different, they appear almost united in their support for the cultural individuality of American life.

As well as their location, the magazines' dates are also very close. The 'synchronic slice' approach positions their artistic and literary preoccupations against their cultural background at this key moment in the transformation of American identity, particularly (though not at all exclusively) in the shadow of impending war. In the case of *The Seven Arts* this related directly to the magazine's progress; against the national trend, it held out for pacifism. In *291* the war is sidelined in favour of a more urgent war against artistic traditionalism or romanticism; *The Pagan* maintained a left-wing anti-war, anti-capitalist stance in its editorials and also in some of its poetry and fiction. *The Soil*, in five issues, only once mentions the war in Europe; there is nothing however to suggest that the war declaration was in any way a cause of its cessation. The magazines have in common an idealism which the war possibly subsequently dissipated, an awareness of the necessity for an art which corresponds to social and industrial change. Importantly, all this took place at a particular time when the commercial and business success of America, already becoming a symptom of its world domination, was having a marked effect on its art and its criticism.

All the magazines but one have a short run. *The Soil*, *291*, and *The Seven Arts* all ceased production within twelve months. *The Pagan* was regularly produced for four years and intermittently for another two, which makes it all the more interesting that it has never previously been the subject of a detailed examination. This fact, incidentally, also supports the idea that 'success' is measured, if not by the accrual of financial wealth, then by the accrual of symbolic capital, an idea which enters my discussion at various points during the following chapters. It is not my intention here to piece together a 'history' of each magazine, a task which is in some cases, due to lack of records, impossible, and which if it is possible, has already been attempted.<sup>74</sup> Instead the cultural commerce, the dialogism, of each magazine is indicated, firstly by addressing it as a self-contained, composite object incorporating editorials and

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<sup>74</sup> In the case of *The Seven Arts*, for instance, Charles Silet has done so through anecdotal references in the retrospective articles and memoirs of some of the major contributors. See Silet, 'The Seven Arts: The Artist and the Community' (unpublished doctoral Thesis, 1973). Also see Robert Janssens, *The American Literary Review, 1920-1950* (Paris: Mouton, 1968) for an author- historical approach using the examples of long-running American reviews.

ancillary material such as announcements, advertising matter, and subscription requests, and secondly by examining its dialogue with other publications. The magazines are intentionally disparate, but the idea of commerce which articulates this discussion unites their various disparate aspects and also enables a unique, time-specific discourse. These magazines' commerce was with their public, with other publications large and small, and with one another.

### *Note on Modernism and Modernity*

Modernity is the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art, of which the other half is the eternal and the immutable....<sup>75</sup>

Baudelaire was speaking of modernity and the modern in relation to history and tradition. Peter Brooker has said of modernism that it is 'a retrospective, problematic, expanding concept.'<sup>76</sup> There is of course no simple view of where modernity begins and where modernism, viewed as a reaction to modernity, ends, and discussions of this distinction are legion.<sup>77</sup> One of the ancillary aims of this thesis is to add strength to the body of criticism which seeks to extend the understanding of this relation from its previously very narrow base, a particularly formal view which until recently resulted in a circumscribed canon of select authors. The magazines in this study all emphasise the new — new technology, new art, new literature, new criticism, new directions, new living conditions. And if there is any consensus that the most active phase of the modernist period is the 1920s, then the work examined in this thesis can

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<sup>75</sup> Baudelaire, quoted in Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> Brooker, 'The Freewoman, The New Freewoman and The Egoist: Modern Women and Masculine Modernism', *Les Revues Modernistes Anglo-Américaines: Lieux d'Echanges, Lieux d'Exil*, ed. Benoît Tadié (Paris: Entr'revues, 2006).

<sup>77</sup> Discussions of modernism and modernity, in literature particularly, are too many to be listed here but one could cite various sample discussions: Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* is a comprehensive history of modern and modernist thought; also see Henry Meschonnic, Gabriella Bedetti, and Alice Otis, 'Modernity Modernity', *New Literary History* 23.2, *Revising Historical Understanding* (Spring 1992), pp. 401-430, on the position of 'modernism' and 'modernity' in history; Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism' in *Modernism/Modernity* 8.3 (September 2001), pp. 493-513 on the changing canonical position of 'modernism'; Harskamp, J. T., 'Contemporaneity, Modernism, Avant-Garde', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 20.3 (Summer 1980), pp. 204-215 for a philosophical examination; Marjorie Perloff, *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwest University Press, 1990) and *21st Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) on modernist and 'arrière-garde' poetics; Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983) on the cultural ramifications of the idea of modernity from Goethe through to the 1960s; Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989).

be taken as representative of the plethora of ideas which fermented in the prior decade and engendered those post-war ideas. In the words of Churchill and McKible: ‘Little magazines thus embed great modernist works ... in the literary and social discourses, political debates, and historical events of the day, allowing us to see the famous monologue as part of the larger dialogue of modernity.’<sup>78</sup> These periodicals are undoubtedly part of this ‘larger dialogue’. The focus is on related issues raised by four different texts, as a way of representing the different cultural and ideological cross-currents of twentieth-century American modernity, and the thesis returns from time to time to the modernist/modern distinction as it appears relevant.<sup>79</sup> One of Raymond Williams’ most incisive essays in *Politics of Modernism* suggests that modernism can be characterised by both uncertainty and competition:

Although Modernism can be clearly identified as a distinctive movement, in its deliberate distance from and challenge to more traditional forms of art and thought, it is also strongly characterized by its internal diversity of methods and emphases: a restless and often directly competitive sequence of innovations and experiments, always more immediately recognized by what they are breaking from than by what, in any simple way, they are breaking towards.<sup>80</sup>

The next four chapters of this thesis echo and elaborate on what Raymond Williams suggests here: all four magazines contain strong statements of a break with the past, but their rendering of a possible future for the arts in America is radically different, and sometimes ‘directly competitive’. This fact in itself suggests the extraordinary reach of modernist ideas within this very short period of time.

The notion of commerce is used as a fulcrum for the whole discussion, and enables a discourse to emerge which relates quintessentially to its historical and geographical time, place, and *milieu*. The discussion is restricted almost entirely to American publications in both primary and secondary source and critical material: part of what emerges from the thesis is the idea of a distinct, specifically American modernity. Each magazine, as will be shown, engages with, or articulates, the notion of commerce and all its various connotations: my concluding chapter discusses newness

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<sup>78</sup> McKible and Churchill, *Little Magazines & Modernism*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>79</sup> A relationship is assumed here between ‘modernism’ and the importance of newness. Levenson contends that it is the ascendancy of the word ‘New’ under the banner of which ‘modernism’ took place and that it is the discourse of the ‘new’ – a ‘contest of novelties’ that is overarching; the term ‘modernism’ could have unfolded, for instance, in the terms of the symbolist movement, or the old reconstituted. (Michael Levenson, presentation at London Modernism Seminar, 2 June 2007). In general during this discussion I have distinguished between the new (as modern) and the avant-garde, particularly in Chapters 2 and 3 relating to *The Soil* and 291.

<sup>80</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 43.



and the ‘sale’ of the idea of the new: that which constituted the important ‘new’ for each magazine, and how those ideas are propagated. I begin now with a chapter on *The Seven Arts*, whose direct discourse engaging with commerce and art will help to delineate the cultural background to the magazines described subsequently.

## Chapter 1 *The Seven Arts: Ancient Joy in Modern America*

Here is an echo of its ancient joy. The dance has come into its own again with a new blend of colours and countries. It comes to rouse and rejuvenate the arts and the world.<sup>1</sup>

### *Introduction*

This chapter on *The Seven Arts* interprets the word ‘commerce’ in its broadest sense. The magazine acts as a fulcrum of commerce: of interaction with the past, present, and future in the years 1916-1917. Though commerce in the day-to-day sense of business transactions is also central to this magazine (a philosophical and aesthetic stance on which this chapter expands) the term serves here to interlock *The Seven Arts* firmly with its cultural moment. *The Seven Arts* is the most well-known journal discussed in this thesis, and besides being a magazine of the arts it was also a publication which provided a distillation of radical cultural comment. Much of the previous scholarship of *The Seven Arts* has been concerned with it primarily as a vehicle for the work of Randolph Bourne as leading writer of the group sometimes known as the ‘Young Intellectuals’. While Bourne’s work was very significant, this chapter addresses primarily the ideas about American art which are particularly expressed in the first volume of the magazine and for which it was originally founded; the second volume became gradually taken up with political commentary in the face of impending war.

Some of the discussion in *The Seven Arts* hinges on the dichotomy between art and commerce, as will become clear during the course of this chapter, and the magazine is therefore an ideal point from which to explore this idea. This is not the first time that this has been noted, but it is the first time that the effects of this dichotomy have been explored within the context of periodicals as material, composite objects, including commercial and marketing material, financial considerations, and their dialogic relation to other periodicals. The art/commerce distinction is also crucial to the other three magazines addressed here, and one purpose of this thesis is to examine the way that it operated. *The Seven Arts* therefore leads this study, representative of an extraordinary strain of discourse in an extraordinary era, on the leading edge of the

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Untermeyer, ‘The Dance’ *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), pp. 79-81, p. 81.

technical, political, and social modernist thought constituted by American ideas and ideals. The periodical was founded in the name of regeneration: it rejected the decadence and fatuous gentility of the recent past in favour of incorporating an older tradition into the future of American arts, and hence, the future of America. The identity of 'America' is clearly an important, though complex issue, a point which I briefly revisit in my Conclusion. As will become clear, *The Seven Arts*' contributors published, in 1917, work which in their view supported their ideas on the reflection, in art, of America's distinct cultural identity.

This chapter will begin by introducing the principal contributors and their background, essential information for an understanding of the relation of the magazine to its broader field. It continues with an exploration of the commerce of *The Seven Arts* with its own culture: with the past, with the future, then with its present, using commerce to mean the social or intellectual interchange of the present, as in definition (2), and spiritual interchange with the past, as in definition (4).<sup>2</sup> In the course of the discussion of how the magazine addresses its own contemporary society is given an indication of how it incorporates views on modern technology; there is also some exploration of the physical qualities of the magazine and what these might indicate about its commercial niche. Finally the chapter describes *The Seven Arts* in terms of the paradox of its own conclusion, and also how its critical stance relates to the general development of American modernism: while it is in favour of the modern it often fails to acknowledge the products of modernity.

### *Background and Editorial Staff*

Most of the editors and contributors to *The Seven Arts* were already known to the public through other writing; there is no question that they were established as career writers. The magazine was founded in 1917 by James Oppenheim after obtaining the willing sponsorship of the wealthy heiress Annette Rankine, who, a *New York Times* article indicated, was the widow of a 'millionaire lawyer and electric power plant

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<sup>2</sup> See pages 4-5.

owner'.<sup>3</sup> Oppenheim retrospectively described Rankine as 'a lady who had a collection of Whistlers and was bored looking at them.'<sup>4</sup> As a result *The Seven Arts* was independently and very adequately funded from the start, through the profits of nineteenth-century industrial expansion.

Oppenheim was already a published author, and unlike many editors of small magazines, he received a good salary for his work as editor of *The Seven Arts*. In the words of Waldo Frank, the other founding collaborator, Oppenheim was 'a well-established writer of stories about New York immigrants, for which he was paid fabulous sums by the mass magazines.'<sup>5</sup> The view expressed in Hoffman, therefore, which rather implies that he was forced to earn his living writing 'sentimental magazine stories, drudgery for a mythically inclined temperament', is more than a little romanticised.<sup>6</sup> Even in 1916 his motives for starting the magazine, he freely admitted, were not "pure". 'I was inanely jealous of the gang of fellows who had shot the *New Republic* into existence,' he went on, 'a "journal of opinion," mind you, when the real thing would be a journal of art. Perhaps, too, I wanted a job and a certain eminence. Motives do get mixed, however noble we try to be'.<sup>7</sup> In 1916, Oppenheim was a socialist, a teacher, and a poet: besides a published poetry collection, at least four published novels and numerous early screen plays (one of which was an adaptation of his own novel *Idle Wives*) he had written the enduring poem 'Bread and Roses' about a strike march, a poem which metaphorically appeals for food for workers' minds as well as for their bodies.<sup>8</sup> The *Seven Arts* team of contributing editors, after about two months, consisted of Paul Rosenfeld, Waldo Frank, Louis Untermeyer, Van Wyck Brooks, and Randolph Bourne. Rosenfeld was a

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<sup>3</sup> Described as such in *New York Times*, 'Police Hunt in Vain For Wealthy Widow Missing Three Days' (5 April 1921), p.1.

<sup>4</sup> James Oppenheim, 'The Story of the *Seven Arts*,' *American Mercury* XX (June, 1930), p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> Waldo Frank, *Memoirs* (Cambridge, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), ed. Alan Trachtenberg, p. 83. Oppenheim's previously published novels include *The Nine Tenths* (1911), *The Beloved* (1915), *Doctor Rast* (1909), *Idle Wives* (1914).

<sup>6</sup> Frederick Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 88.

<sup>7</sup> Oppenheim, 'The Story of *The Seven Arts*', p. 156. Oppenheim tells of his loss of the romantic ideal that art could change society. A number of art critics (Robert Hughes, for instance) have set a much later point in the mid-twentieth century, for the decline of this idealism.

<sup>8</sup> 'Hearts starve as well as bodies: give us Bread, but give us Roses!' Well known still, this song was adopted by the International Workers of the World as a theme song, and has been set to music numerous times. The magazine of the British section of the IWW is also currently named Bread and Roses. See Jim Zwick, 'Behind the Song: "Bread and Roses"', *Sing Out!* 46.4 (2003), pp. 92-94.

young reviewer and music critic who was a regular contributor to the mainstream liberal monthly, *The New Republic* of Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann (1914); it was among the contributors to *The New Republic* that the idea of *The Seven Arts* originated.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, in fact, it was Waldo Frank, more than Oppenheim, who retained the more ‘mythical’ view in his later novels and criticism. Originally closely involved with Oppenheim in founding the magazine, besides engaging in cultural criticism in *The Seven Arts*, *The Smart Set*, and other journals, Frank was also at work on his first published novel, *The Unwelcome Man* (1917). He continued, through most of his writing life, to be an advocate of social and political reform, his fiction and essays displaying the ‘mystic nationalism’ which typified the philosophy of *The Seven Arts*, and which was to be sustained in his writing until the beginning of World War Two.<sup>10</sup> Untermeyer had published two collections of poetry, and as well as regular poetry spots, he had authored critical articles and reviews in various established periodicals, instanced by *Theatre Magazine*, *Poet Lore*, *Appleton’s Magazine*, *Forum*, and *Art and Progress*.<sup>11</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, already an influential spokesperson for the generation subsequently known as ‘The Young Intellectuals’, had published *The Wine of the Puritans* (1909) and *America’s Coming-of-Age* (1915), an influential contemporaneous collection of essays.<sup>12</sup> Bourne, who became a regular contributor from April 1917, was a prolific social and political essayist who also wrote for a number of mainstream periodicals including *The New Republic*; it is primarily Bourne’s contributions which have lent *The Seven Arts* its subsequent significance as a political mouthpiece.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Hugh Potter, ‘Paul Rosenfeld: Criticism and Prophecy’, *American Quarterly* 22.1 (Spring 1970), p. 82.

<sup>10</sup> See Clarence J. Karier, ‘Art in a Therapeutic Age: Part 1’, *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 13.3 (July 1979), pp. 51-66, which describes the way that both Frank and his wife, the art therapist Margaret Naumberg, ‘refused to accept the world as they knew it’ and took refuge in a ‘psycho-spiritual haven’; See Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), for a comprehensive summary of Frank’s ideas in relation to those of his co-writers. I have also drawn, here, on letters between Frank and Oppenheim on the inaugural issue of *The Seven Arts*, from the James Oppenheim papers, New York Public Library.

<sup>11</sup> Waldo Frank, *The Unwelcome Man: A Novel* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1917); Louis Untermeyer, *First Love: A Lyric Sequence* (Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1911), and *Challenge* (New York: The Century Co., 1914).

<sup>12</sup> *America and the Young Intellectual* was the title of a 1921 work by Harold Stearns, but the cult of ‘youth’ probably began with Bourne’s *Youth and Life* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913).

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann, *The New Republic* (1914- ). In ‘The Story of *The Seven Arts*’ Oppenheim wrote later that he founded *The Seven Arts* in answer to *The New Republic*, as ‘a journal of art’ rather than ‘a journal of opinion.’ See also Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), Ch. 6, on Bourne’s relegation

This loosely-knit group of authors and cultural critics has been termed by Daniel Aaron an ‘apostolic movement’ (recalling Raymond Williams’ idea of a distinct cultural formation) and indeed Bourne’s completely un-ironic ideal of a ‘Beloved Community’ in which all Americans were ‘to understand one another more warmly’ has an evangelistic tone.<sup>14</sup> *The Seven Arts* has been critically examined by various writers, usually in the context of what seems, in retrospect, a rather innocent form of American pre-World War One intellectual and literary socialism.<sup>15</sup> The creative work published in the magazine is not necessarily at the forefront of the historical avant-garde: Ezra Pound, largely oblivious to the American political scene, wrote, from Europe, of the magazine’s cessation: ‘I can’t greatly regret the demise of the “Seven Arts” ... A man with any mental alertness COULDN’T have run such a dull paper. AND with such a subsidy.’<sup>16</sup> But, it has to be said, may also have reflected the fact that he had earlier submitted work which been returned by Oppenheim with the following remark: ‘There is nothing the matter with my pluralism but there seems much the matter with your essay. It bores me to death. Here it is.’<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, because of the subsequent eminence of its critics in other areas, its legendary pacifism, and its attempt, as Mark Pittenger has pointed out, to challenge ‘the terms of the older socialist discourse’ away from evolution and towards science and philosophy, the

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in *The New Republic* and his search for an all-embracing *milieu*, which Stansell suggests he found at *The Seven Arts*.

<sup>14</sup> Randolph Bourne, ‘Trans-National America’, *Atlantic Monthly* 118 (July 1916), p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> See Blake, *Beloved Community*, and Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc, 1961). The long careers of most of the group, their ‘cultural nationalism’, and their subsequent influence, stemming from their publication in *The Seven Arts*, have been the subject of a number of unpublished Ph.D. theses: Charles L. P. Silet, ‘The Seven Arts: The Artist and the Community’ (Indiana University, 1973); Claire Sacks, ‘The Seven Arts Critics: A Study of Cultural Nationalism in America 1910-1930’ (University of Wisconsin, 1955), Douglas Clayton’s ‘Literary Radicals: A History of the ‘Seven Arts’ and Its Critics’ (Northwestern University, 1989) highlights the contradictions and tensions inherent in the views of these critics, in *The Seven Arts* and subsequently, and argues for their complexity rather than their simplicity. Blake’s work is a cultural and historical study of the critics Bourne, Brooks, and Frank, and the historian Lewis Mumford. Claire Sacks’ thesis has been extensively used as a source of information: it concentrates primarily on the political context of *The Seven Arts* and its particular type of cultural criticism.

<sup>16</sup> Ezra Pound, letter to Margaret Anderson, 6 November 1917, on the demise of *The Seven Arts*, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), p. 143.

<sup>17</sup> Letter, James Oppenheim to Ezra Pound, 12 September 1916, James Oppenheim Papers, New York Public Library, Box 1.

magazine's dissemination of creative work, reviews, and art and media commentary has tended to be marginalised in relation to discussions of its cultural criticism.<sup>18</sup>

### The Seven Arts' *commerce with America's future*

A prediction of cultural renewal, the will to 'rejuvenate the arts and the world' is fervently expressed right from the first issue. In the words of Waldo Frank, acknowledged by James Oppenheim in the editorial section:

It is our faith and the faith of many, that we are living in the first days of a renascent period, a time which means for America the coming of that national self-consciousness which is the beginning of greatness. In all such epochs the arts cease to be private matters; they become not only the expression of the national life but a means to its enhancement.

Our arts show signs of this change. It is the aim of *The Seven Arts* to become a channel for the flow of these new tendencies; an expression of our American arts which shall be fundamentally an expression of our American life ... What we ask of the writer is simply self-expression without regard to current magazine standards.<sup>19</sup>

Art, expressed in this way, becomes a national, political, and social instrument, investing in the future, and singling out *The Seven Arts* 'manifesto' from those of other coterie publications of the time. Unlike *The Masses*, *The Little Review* and *The Egoist*, *The Seven Arts* had none of what Morrisson calls a 'rhetorical lack of concern for audiences'.<sup>20</sup> It did not set out to shock, rather (as exemplified by the editorial passage above) to exhort its readers. Oppenheim wrote later that the group had been naive in their belief that 'that lost soul among the nations, America, could be regenerated by art.'<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the extraordinary, declamatory expression of this text ('it is our faith, and the faith of many') seems to echo a particular, almost biblical rhetoric of the era. 'Americans have faith' declared Paul Constant in his 1915 work *America and Her Problems*. Constant also wrote, incidentally, of 'the violent dislike of the Americans ... to what they called the unbearable burden of the old questions bequeathed by Europe ... They were in a hurry to escape from these questions and establish their new scheme of existence.' A 1914 work by Edward Steiner, an immigrant, charting his American acculturation and assimilation, similarly declares

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<sup>18</sup> Mark Pittenger, *American Socialists and Evolutionary Thought, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 222.

<sup>19</sup> Editorial, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), p. 135.

<sup>21</sup> Oppenheim, 'The Story of *The Seven Arts*', p. 156.

that 'faith in humanity is the finest inheritance of the American people.'<sup>22</sup> This florid language appears less remarkable when compared to the language and form of the Declaration of Independence, the document in which the rulers of America, in the words of Christopher Looby, 'spoke them into existence.' '... for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other ...' is indeed an explicit declaration of a collective Faith. Looby writes of 'national creation through signification', inextricably linking a biblical declamation with the birth of American nationalism.<sup>23</sup> In this context, also, the consistent rhetoric linking art, politics and patriotism which is a distinctive feature of *The Seven Arts* seems slightly less idiosyncratic.

Both Christine Stansell and Susan Hegeman have pointed out that the idea of a transformative, organicist Art originates within nineteenth-century Romanticism.<sup>24</sup> But in these metaphors of growth, rebirth and resurgence, the phraseology of *The Seven Arts* group also had more in common with the way that contemporary governmental ideals and hopes for the future of America were expressed than they would have liked to believe: a speech by the then president Woodrow Wilson (reprinted in his 1913 collection *The New Freedom*) refers to the 'utility, the vitality, the fruitage of life' which comes 'like the natural growth of a great tree, from the soil'.<sup>25</sup> He spoke (and wrote) of the 'constant rise of the sap from the bottom' of society, and of 'nourishing stalks deep-planted in the common soil.' The roots of this 'great American people' are in the 'soil of what is lovely, pure, and of good report'; he called for the rise of joyous 'streams of hope and determination bound to renew the face of the earth'.<sup>26</sup> Oppenheim's 'adolescent America', Brooks' 'Young America', Frank's 'Emerging Greatness' appear to follow a similar line of expression: looking

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<sup>22</sup> Paul D'Estournelles Constant, *America and Her Problems* (New York: MacMillan, 1915), p. 369; Edward Steiner, *From Alien to Citizen: My Life in America* (Fleming H. Revell, 1914);

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996); *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000), p. 148; Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Roosevelt, 'The New Nationalism' speech to the 1910 administration, reproduced at <http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=501>, accessed 27 October 2008; Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> Woodrow Wilson, 'The New Nationalism' in *The New Freedom*, p. 85.



towards the future is associated with growth, youth, and pupation or birth.<sup>27</sup> *The New Freedom* concentrates on American productivity, and excludes the Arts as either a product of American civilization or an area of achievement, and so thus contains, also, the germ of *The Seven Arts*' main dissent.<sup>28</sup> But these continual tropes of growth, resurgence, and nature, applied to artistic creativity, are crucial in *The Seven Arts*. 'The mind' Brooks had written in *America's Coming-of-Age*, 'is a flower that has an organic connection with the soil it springs from.' 'Whitman', he also wrote, 'was himself a great vegetable of a man, all of a piece in roots, flavour, substantiality and succulence, well-ripened in the common sunshine.'<sup>29</sup> The early issues of *The Seven Arts* are inspired, from the beginning, by the words of the French novelist and psychologist, Romain Rolland. His initial essay combines both a prayer-like expression of faith and an organicist hope for America's artistic future, and indeed reads almost as though it has been delivered from a pulpit. 'You have been born of a soil that is neither encumbered nor shut in by past spiritual edifices.' 'Be free! Do not become slaves to foreign models!' 'You are at the beginning of your journey, at the dawn of your day.'<sup>30</sup>

### *The Seven Arts and commerce with the recent past*

In the eyes of this group, writing "the new" meant writing out the genteel tradition in American letters and the bellettrism of the nineteenth century, taking in modern city life in all its variety and expressing it without reserve or censorship. The theme of censorship, in fact, emerges as prominent in a number of *Seven Arts* items, and will be raised again in context below. *The Seven Arts* directs its anti-Puritanism towards an abhorred American 'tradition', the perceived drawbacks of which had most clearly been articulated in a lecture by George Santayana, 'The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy' (1912). In this well-known lecture, Santayana (an acknowledged influence on Brooks) saw 'the American Will' towards 'invention and

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<sup>27</sup> Oppenheim, 'America' (poem), *The Seven Arts* 1.5 (March 1917), p. 463; Frank, 'Emerging Greatness' (a review of Sherwood Anderson's first novel), *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), p. 73; Brooks, 'Young America', *The Seven Arts* 1.2 (December 1916), p. 144.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, *The New Freedom*, reiterates American advancement in science, industry, and working life generally but fails almost entirely to address American artistic production or education.

<sup>29</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, *America's Coming-of-Age* [1915] (New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> Rolland, 'America and the Arts', *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), pp. 48, 50, 53.

industry and social organization' as out of step with a recalcitrant 'American Intellect'. He traced what he regarded as intellectual stagnation back to Calvinism and to the Emersonian 'transcendental myth' which he described as part of a tradition which 'forbids people to confess that they are unhappy' and which therefore cannot produce great works of art since 'serious poetry, profound religion ... are the joys of an unhappiness that confesses itself.'<sup>31</sup>

The division between the genteel tradition on the one hand, and valid artistic and intellectual practice on the other, was a dichotomy based on which a number of thinkers, besides those whose articles featured in *The Seven Arts*, developed theories about American art and American society. Santayana was not making rash judgements; a professor of philosophy (though always slightly removed from the circle of the academic establishment), he had devised and taught at Harvard, in 1883, the first American course in formal aesthetics, which was particularly wide-ranging, and he was influential from that time until he left the university in 1912.<sup>32</sup> 'The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy' was in fact addressed as much towards the Harvard establishment as it was towards the general public; 'too diffident or too polite', however, to raise the idea that the academic establishment was creatively sterile, he articulated it only when he was 3,000 miles away delivering an invited lecture to the California-based Philosophical Union.<sup>33</sup> Although 'The Genteel Tradition' remains one of his best-known essays, it was essentially his swan song; soon afterwards he left America and after the outbreak of World War I in 1914 was unable to re-enter because of his non-American citizenship status. Nevertheless, his idea continues to inform – not least through its title – American literary criticism and cultural history. Robert Dawidoff, in *The Genteel Tradition and the Sacred Rage* (1992), gives a concise explanation of what Santayana meant: 'the prudish, moralizing, slackened remnant of the old Protestant Hebraized Calvinism', which 'stands for the

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<sup>31</sup> George Santayana, 'The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy', *The Genteel Tradition: Nine Essays by George Santayana* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 51. For discussions of Santayana's influence on Brooks, see Wilfred McClay, 'Two Versions of the Genteel Tradition', *New England Quarterly* 55.3 (September 1982), pp. 368-391, and Robert Dawidoff, 'Criticism and American Cultural Repair', *American Literary History* 1.3 (Autumn 1989), pp. 665-674.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Coleman and Johanna Resler, 'Santayana's Lectures on Aesthetics', Indiana University at <http://www.math.uwaterloo.ca/~kerlows/Santayana/Bulletiny/04jresler.pdf>, 23-37 (accessed 14 Jan 2007) give details of that course.

<sup>33</sup> Douglas Wilson, introduction to 'The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy', in *The Genteel Tradition*, p. 37.

cultural situation of America ... the middle-class orthodoxy emanating from New England across America. It is the perfumed parlor air one breathes in American letters and art.’<sup>34</sup>

As a pupil of William James and Josiah Royce (who, incidentally, first described the ideal of the ‘Beloved Community’ adopted by Bourne),<sup>35</sup> Santayana occupies a historical niche within a period identified by Max Fisch as ‘a classic period in American philosophy, beginning just after the Civil War and continuing to the eve of the Second World War’.<sup>36</sup> Significantly Fisch also includes within this group the innovative pragmatist, John Dewey (Bourne’s mentor at Columbia), whose work was directed at the ‘problems of American Democracy’ and whose essays also appear in two separate issues of the magazine.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Santayana has been described as ‘among those figures who have helped us to extend our capacities for experience by assimilating neglected elements from the European past and present’.<sup>38</sup> The incorporation of his ideas into *The Seven Arts* lends additional support to the idea of positioning this magazine at a modernist nexus, characterised particularly by commerce between the old and the new.

To further the aim of strengthening and individualising the art of America, one form that the magazine’s condemnation takes is a strident objection to the prevalent censorship of the immediate Victorian past. The novelist Theodore Dreiser, whose work had been continually under the scrutiny of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice since the publication of *Jennie Gerhardt* in 1900, was a leading

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Dawidoff, *The Genteel Tradition and the Sacred Rage* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 175. This clearly gendered description draws on Santayana’s own well-known characterisation of the American intellect in the same lecture: ‘The American Will inhabits the sky-scraper; the American Intellect inhabits the colonial mansion. The one is the sphere of the American man; the other, at least predominantly, of the American woman. The one is all aggressive enterprise; the other is all genteel tradition’: ‘The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy’, in *The Genteel Tradition*, p.40.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Finally, beyond the actual communities that we directly encounter in life there is the ideal “Beloved Community” of all those who would be fully dedicated to the cause of loyalty, truth and reality itself.’ Entry for Josiah Royce, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, on line at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/royce/> (accessed 31 July 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Max H. Fisch, ed., *Classic American Philosophers* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1951), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Gail Kennedy, in *Classic American Philosophers*, note on John Dewey’s essay ‘The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy’, p. 327; For a full exposition of Dewey’s influence on *The Seven Arts* see Blake, *Beloved Community*, Chapters 5 and 6. Dewey’s change to a pro-war stance was a cause of dismay to the *Seven Arts* group, who continued to be in favour of pacifism.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Blair Rice, note on George Santayana, in *Classic American Philosophers*, p.258.

contributor to the magazine. His essay 'Life, Art, and America' (February 1917) contains a comprehensive exposition of the culture which represented everything that he believed stultified American arts and letters: 'A picture of a woman was sinful. A statue equally so. The dance in our home and in our town was taboo. The theatre was an institution which led to crime. The saloon a center of low, even bestial, vices.'<sup>39</sup> In the December 1916 issue, too, James Oppenheim had written:

[T]he belief in pure art doubtless springs from the modern fallacy that we have men and women amongst us (or rather we are such men and women) who have no under-parts ... but it is there – the vulgar passions, the primitive instincts, and all that is brutal, sordid, ridiculous, absurd, and cheap.<sup>40</sup>

Identifying the American Puritan ancestry with this repression, Randolph Bourne wrote '[T]he puritan is the most stable and persistent of types ... the puritan always needs to be thoroughly explained and exposed'.<sup>41</sup> In fact the Society for the Suppression of Vice was a comparatively recent Victorian invention, founded by Anthony Comstock in 1873 and pursued with great zeal throughout the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> *The Seven Arts* group were not alone in their condemnation. The audacious publication of censorable material characterises many American magazines of this time, epitomised by the much-publicized serial publication in *The Little Review* of parts of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, their subsequent prosecution and successful defence in 1921. Protest against 'Comstockery' also filled the *Smart Set* edited by Henry Mencken and George Nathan from 1914, and continued in its successor *The American Mercury* from 1923. An article by Henry Mencken, in support of Dreiser and against the 'Comstocks', also appears in the *Seven Arts* for August 1917.<sup>43</sup> While Mencken's own organ was by that time well-known for making a scapegoat of the Comstock regime, his *Seven Arts* diatribe serves to remind the modern reader of the continuing predominance of morally-inflected literary criticism in the mass-circulation press of the time. He writes:

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<sup>39</sup> Dreiser, 'Life, Art, and America', *The Seven Arts* 1.3 (February 1917), pp. 369-70.

<sup>40</sup> Oppenheim, editorial, *The Seven Arts* 1.2 (December 1916), p.154.

<sup>41</sup> Randolph Bourne, 'The Puritan's Will to Power', *The Seven Arts* 1.6 (April 1917), 631-637, pp. 631-632. It is worth noting that some of Bourne's anti-puritanism was also directed against the general tide of popular enthusiasm of the era for eugenics, which he condemned as 'superstition'.

<sup>42</sup> An equivalent organisation had operated in England since 1802. Details and excerpt at <http://www.victorianlondon.org/crime/suppression.htm>, ed. Lee Jackson, accessed 3 February 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Mencken, 'The Dreiser Bugaboo', *The Seven Arts* 2.4 (August 1917), pp. 507-517.

I single out Dr. Sherman, not because his pompous syllogisms have any plausibility in fact or logic, but simply because he may well stand as archetype of the booming, indignant corrupter of criteria, the moralist turned critic ... what offends him is not actually Dreiser's shortcomings as an artist, but Dreiser's shortcomings as a Christian and an American.<sup>44</sup>

It is, perhaps, ironic that although Mencken supported Dreiser for his determined anti-Puritanism he was, according to one biographer, also 'revolted by his [Dreiser's] promiscuity and arrogance'.<sup>45</sup>

*The Seven Arts*' rejection of the genteel tradition is likely to have been influenced by Santayana's work; Van Wyck Brooks' *The Wine of the Puritans* (1909) and *America's Coming-of-Age* (1915) preceded his association with Oppenheim's magazine, and are in essence derived from a similar dichotomous starting-point. But while Brooks' essay "'Highbrow" and "Lowbrow"' postulates a possible 'genial middle ground' where two cultures can meet, and another essay in the same volume, 'The Precipitant' postulates Whitman as 'the rudiments of a middle tradition', there is less compromise within the critical discourse of *The Seven Arts*. *America's Coming-of-Age* had lamented the incompatibility between the need for commercial success and the ability to produce ideas and ideals; in *The Seven Arts* Dreiser follows suit, writing in 'Life, Art, and America' that in America 'you see a nation dedicated to so-called intellectual and spiritual freedom, but actually devoted with an almost bee-like industry to the gathering and storing and articulation and organization and use of purely material things.'<sup>46</sup> To paraphrase Oppenheim, then: for both Dreiser and Brooks the getting of the bread precluded the gathering of the roses. This central conflict is also approached in the next two chapters here, characterised by the rivalry between *291* and *The Soil*, and also reappears, satirised, in *The Pagan*, the subject of chapter 4.

The work/art bifurcation was to occupy Brooks' critical understanding for more than a decade, and led to a retrenchment of his opinions on modernity which eventually lost him his hitherto exalted place as an influential critic. Wasserstrom traces this decline to various factors, and includes the attractive (but probably inaccurate) idea that his

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 513.

<sup>45</sup> Terry Teachout, *The Skeptic: A Life of H. L. Mencken* (New York: Harper Collins Perennial, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> See Brooks, *America's Coming-of-Age* on the division of American life into the life of the mind and the necessities of commercial life; Dreiser, 'Life, Art, and America', pp. 369-370.

inability to resolve the dilemma that he himself had set up led to his mental breakdown between 1926 and 1930.<sup>47</sup> In 1917, however, his ideas were paramount, particularly to younger writers Oppenheim, Frank, and Rosenfeld. Echoing this important strain of radical thought, *The Seven Arts* includes an appropriate allegory, ‘The Class of 19—’ written by the young Paul Rosenfeld (under the pseudonym ‘Peter Minuit’).<sup>48</sup> An ‘American intellectual’ goes to a class reunion expecting to be lauded for his academic accomplishments but finds himself hopelessly ostracised. After a number of abortive conversations he ‘no longer entertained any idea of being asked to speak, much less of being honoured.’ Asked what he is doing now, to integrate himself with the rest of the group he answers, “I keep a shop in a small town up New York State”.<sup>49</sup> Rosenfeld’s short allegory is noted at this point because it so precisely illustrates this group’s particular cultural dilemma. Rosenfeld’s professor is obliged to deny all of his intellectual and emotional experience in favour of the commercial.

In a corresponding essay entitled ‘The Splinter of Ice’, first published in *The Seven Arts* in 1917, Brooks also wrote:

How then can our literature be anything but impotent? It is inevitably so, for it springs from a national mind that has been standardized in another sphere than that of experience.<sup>50</sup>

Brooks’ reference here is to writers who ‘are themselves victims of the universal taboo the ideal of material success has placed upon experience.’ American writers, he continues, ‘sell themselves out at the first bid’ due to the economic pressure placed on them by society at large. Expanding on the sterility of modern American writing,

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<sup>47</sup> William Wasserstrom, *The Legacy of Van Wyck Brooks: A Study of Maladies and Motives* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), Ch.1, ‘Less than an Oracle’. In fact Brooks it appears had been unstable from a much earlier date: a letter from Eleanor Brooks (his wife) to James Oppenheim in *The Seven Arts* papers talks of his being under his doctor’s care for a ‘bad nervous breakdown.’ Letter, Eleanor Brooks to James Oppenheim, August 6 1916, James Oppenheim papers, box 1, New York Public Library.

<sup>48</sup> See Blake, p. 153 and Davidson, *Early American Modernist Painting* for ascribing the ‘Peter Minuit’ pseudonym to Rosenfeld; “Peter Minuit”, ‘The Class of 19—’, *The Seven Arts* 2.2 (June 1917), pp. 171-176. Peter Minuit was one of the earliest Dutch settlers in the district which ultimately became known as New York, and thus Rosenfeld’s pseudonym is in tune with the theme of the magazine, the ‘rediscovery’ of America through its arts.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175, p. 176.

<sup>50</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, ‘The Splinter of Ice’, *The Seven Arts* 1.3 (January 1917), p. 276.

Brooks again echoes Santayana, who we have seen laments the stagnancy of an Art which is ashamed to confess itself unhappy. Brooks writes:

This is the way Americans think, and what they think, whether they profess the religion of mind cure, uplift, sunshine, popular pragmatism, the gospel of advertising, or plain business; and they mean exactly what the beauty experts mean when they say, "Avoid strong emotions if you wish to retain a youthful complexion." <sup>51</sup>

Clearly the 'beauty experts' to which he refers are as much a symptom of the material society which he condemns as a whole, whose 'systematic optimism' and materialist 'religion' is viewed by Brooks as a 'denial and evasion of emotional experience'. The emphasis here on experience also relates to the emphasis that the American pragmatism of the philosopher John Dewey places on experience.<sup>52</sup>

Only a tiny minority of Americans, then, according to Brooks, had been able to access the experience necessary for the expression of true literature: this experience had never belonged to American writers who were subject to the 'old Puritan contempt for human nature and the sensuous and imaginative experience that seasons it.'<sup>53</sup> In Brooks' 1917 plea can be seen a germ of American modernist essentialism: of William Carlos Williams' philosophy of 'no ideas but in things', of Wallace Stevens' 'Surface of Things' (In my room, the world is beyond my understanding, / But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four / Hills and a cloud.) and also of Sherwood Anderson's wish to get 'pretty closely down to ugly things of life'.<sup>54</sup> Brooks lauds the foundation of new magazines: 'Think of the European magazines, think of the European groups and brotherhoods that have been inaugurated on lines approximating those of *The Seven Arts*' which are not checked, as he sees it, by the pressure of a material society, but encouraged within the *milieu* of an organic and mature literary tradition.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 278, 279, 270. For a brief discussion of the importance of 'experience' to Dewey's philosophy, see also the conclusion to this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> Brooks, 'The Splinter of Ice', p. 274.

<sup>54</sup> Wallace Stevens, 'Of The Surface of Things' from Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 57; Sherwood Anderson, letter Waldo Frank, 14 November 1916, *The Letters of Sherwood Anderson*, ed. by Howard Mumford Jones and Walter B. Rideout (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), p. 4. Liesl Olson has argued that Modernism, far from expressing common experience as strange and new, is an intentional, hyper-representation of the commonplace. See Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> Brooks, 'The Splinter of Ice', pp. 270-271.

Dreiser's 'Life, Art, and America' expresses a similar idea, but goes further in that it views literary merit as a product of European imperialism: '[t]he trouble with a democracy as opposed to an autocracy, with a line of titled idlers permitted the gift of leisure and indulgence, is that there is no central force to foster art.'<sup>56</sup> In a later well-known essay in *The Dial*, 'On Creating a Usable Past', Brooks similarly comments on a 'lack of any sense of inherited resources' for the development of American literature.<sup>57</sup> It was this kind of insight which gained Brooks a great deal of critical support at the time; Brooks however never did support modernist poetry or literature, and in fact later vociferously turned against it.<sup>58</sup> Both Dreiser's and Brooks' essays in fact restate and develop an older idea, to be found in Edgar Allan Poe's *Philosophy of Furniture* (in which Baudelaire identified the germ of modernity):

We have no aristocracy of blood, and having therefore as a natural, and indeed as an inevitable thing, fashioned for ourselves an aristocracy of dollars, the "display of wealth" has here to take the place and perform the office of the heraldic display in monarchical countries. By a transition readily understood, and which might have been as readily foreseen, we have been brought to merge in simple "show" our notions of taste itself.<sup>59</sup>

Brooks' view of the 'modern', therefore, invalidates the American commercial 'experience' of his time as in any way artistically productive.

All this sounds, to modern academic sensibilities, strangely elitist, especially given Poe's known predilection for the aristocratic. *The Seven Arts* does not, on the whole, seem to question the elitism of its readership, only that of its textual content. Furthermore the term 'mass culture' was not in common use in America until some time later, and both Hegeman and North have remarked on the uneasiness of the "modernist" moment's simultaneous embrace of popular, commercially-driven culture and (elitist) 'true' art.<sup>60</sup> In 1917, popular culture usually went unacknowledged by minority intellectual groups. This is not to say that Conrad Aiken

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<sup>56</sup> Theodore Dreiser, 'Life, Art, and America', p. 382.

<sup>57</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, 'On Creating a Usable Past', *The Dial* (April 1918), p. 337.

<sup>58</sup> Hegeman, *Patterns For America*, p. 80.

<sup>59</sup> Poe, 'The Philosophy of Furniture', in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878) ed. by Charles Baudelaire, p. 671. Baudelaire draws attention to Poe's view in *Edgar Poe, His Life and Works* (1852).

<sup>60</sup> Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 19; Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.141. For seminal views on this debate see Theodore Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* ed. by J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 2001), also Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1988).



and T. S. Eliot did not read and enjoy *Krazy Kat* or *The Katzenjammer Kids*, and Eliot's fondness for the music hall is well-known, but there was scant attempt, among the educated, to subject everyday culture to intellectual scrutiny. This task was left to the dailies and weeklies against which magazines like *The Seven Arts* and *The New Republic* formed a counter-culture: they could perhaps best be described in the words of Raymond Williams, as 'modernists against modernity.'<sup>61</sup> For instance, while the critic Gilbert Seldes, for a short time managing editor of *The Dial*, is sometimes credited (erroneously) by some critics as having made the first serious sustained attempt to examine popular culture on its own terms, what is soon apparent from his 1924 essay collection *The 7 Lively Arts*, is the continuing lack of an appropriate critical framework, and a tendency to revert to a still-dominant aestheticism.<sup>62</sup> Among those publications contemporaneous with *The Seven Arts*, Robert Coady's magazine *The Soil* (the subject of chapter 3) celebrates the appeal of popular detective fiction, sport, commercial art, film, comedy, and machinery. Nevertheless it displays at the same time a great deal of overall ambiguity in its critical and aesthetic judgements. Since the *Seven Arts* group held that a distinctive American Art was still emerging rather than being fully fledged, they might have been expected to embrace popular production as an early example, but on the whole, they did not.

This omission cannot, though, be interpreted as completely dismissive. In *Left Intellectuals and Popular Culture in Twentieth-Century America*, Paul Gorman's rather sweeping reading of Oppenheim's December 1916 editorial leads him to a view, supported by selective quotations, that Oppenheim was actually opposed to the popular.<sup>63</sup> But Oppenheim was opposed primarily to gentility, to 'fine taste' rather than 'raw appetite', to the 'cleansed' purity of most works of art in the realm either of the popular or of the elite. In fact this editorial is in *praise* of 'vulgarity and passionate aspiration', implying 'vulgarity' in its broader sense – 'of the people':

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<sup>61</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 76.

<sup>62</sup> See Conrad Aiken, 'King Bolo and Others' in *A Reviewer's ABC*, introd. by Rufus A. Blanshard (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 196; Gilbert Seldes, *The 7 Lively Arts* [1924], (New York: Dover Publications, 2001); for a positioning of Seldes in relation to mass culture, see North, *Reading 1922*, and for a differently inflected discussion of Seldes' book see Victoria Kingham, 'Seven Arts, Seven Lively Arts and American Cultural Criticism', unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Cambridge University, 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Paul Gorman, *Left Intellectuals & Popular Culture in Twentieth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 59-60, appears to mis-read Oppenheim here.

“The Spoon River Anthology” has some of the greatness of great art for this reason. Its expression is simple, it springs directly from many levels of experience, it leads off towards high places. And so with several of our poets: the attempt to break through the class-crusts, to be assimilated back into the universal experience of life, to take again the leadership toward the future. Once again we have prophecy and philosophy and vulgarity in art.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed it might also have been inconsistent for Oppenheim totally to refute a popular taste that had, at least since 1909, made him a comfortable living.

In addition to this editorial, over its year of publication, *The Seven Arts* contains three other notable exceptions to the charge of elitism. The first is a piece by the artist Marsden Hartley, ‘The Twilight of the Acrobat’, in which he regrets the passing of the American acrobat: ‘Is our acrobatic artist really gone to his aesthetic death?’ asks Hartley, and includes this death as part of a more general decline, an ‘inconceivable dullness’ which ‘inclines distressingly toward the refined’.<sup>65</sup> Thus the dullness and the sterile inheritance of the genteel tradition, (that which Hartley calls ‘the refined’), had contaminated the popular arts as well as the elite. The second exception is a plea by Hiram Moderwell (then a recent Harvard graduate who was already contributing a regular music column to *The New Republic*) to incorporate ragtime into the American ‘professional’ concert-hall circuit.<sup>66</sup> Misguided though Moderwell’s suggested concert programme looks now, and however patronising or apologetic his argument appears, it appears to be an acknowledgement that popular, home-grown American music had a place in the general field of artistic endeavour.<sup>67</sup> A third significant exception is contained in a review of the Italian film ‘Christus’ (director Giuseppe de Liguoro), by Kenneth Macgowan.<sup>68</sup> The article in question attributes the success of films such as D. W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* to the mechanical ‘possibilities of the thing itself.’ American film pioneers, he writes, ‘studied the new mechanism as they used it, and by trial and error they worked out a technique all their own.’<sup>69</sup> He goes on to explain that the innovation in *Intolerance* is directly due to the ‘close-up’, the ‘long shot’, the ‘leader’, the ‘flash-back’, the ‘dissolve’; these are all possibilities of the film camera which make up the art of a film whereas de Liguoro, in ‘Christus’, by seeking

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<sup>64</sup> Oppenheim, editorial, *Seven Arts* 1.2 (December 1916), p. 156.

<sup>65</sup> Marsden Hartley, ‘Twilight of the Acrobat’, *The Seven Arts* 1.3 (January 1917), pp. 288-291, later reprinted in his 1921 collection *Adventures in the Arts*.

<sup>66</sup> Hiram K. Moderwell, ‘A Modest Proposal’ *The Seven Arts* 2.3 (July 1917), pp. 368-376.

<sup>67</sup> The program was repudiated by Carl Van Vechten as inauthentic, in a letter in a later number of *The Seven Arts*: ‘Communication’, *The Seven Arts* 2.5 (September 1917), p. 669.

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth Macgowan, ‘Christus: An Italian Photoplay’, *The Seven Arts* 2.3 (July 1917), pp. 392-396.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

‘beauty but not life’, and not exploiting these technical possibilities, reduces the film to ‘unhuman recitation of facts with which Sunday school scholars are familiar’.<sup>70</sup> Macgowan therefore not only appreciates the significance of the integration of technology into art to render new art forms, but further, acknowledges the importance of correspondingly new standards of judgement to replace those of classical aesthetics, and deliberately contrasts an old aesthetic with a new. He became, in the nineteen-twenties, an innovative theatre director, directing a number of Eugene O’Neill’s plays against a minimalist set design which was one of the first American uses of the psychological in theatrical *mise-en-scène*.<sup>71</sup>

A general exclusion from *The Seven Arts*’ condemnation of the past century is the reverence held by the editorial group for Walt Whitman. In the inaugural editorial already mentioned above in relation to the magazine’s investment in the American future, Romain Rolland specifically positions Whitman as a link between the classical and the new:

Behind you, alone, the elemental Voice of a great pioneer, in whose message you may well find an almost legendary omen of your task to come, - your Homer: Walt Whitman.<sup>72</sup>

We have already seen Brooks’ placement of Whitman as the ‘Precipitant’ for America’s regeneration. The figure of Whitman as the Homer of America recurs in his essay ‘The Splinter of Ice’, and indeed throughout most of the issues of the magazine in various other guises: critical essays, reviews, and poetry.<sup>73</sup> At the time, in fact, all sides of the radical press carried articles that paid homage to Whitman, including the avowedly socialist *Masses*, the ‘anarchist’ *Little Review*, and Robert Coady’s *The Soil*. The ‘apolitical’ *Poetry* also included lengthy tributes to Whitman in its early issues, as did the more mainstream liberal *New Republic*. Even the well-known iconoclast Henry Mencken had given Whitman a kind of grudging support in *The Smart Set*, as, at the end of the previous century, had James Huneker and Vance

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

<sup>71</sup> See Thomas A. Bloom, *Kenneth Macgowan and the Aesthetic Paradigm for the New Stagecraft in America* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

<sup>72</sup> Romain Rolland, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), p. 51.

<sup>73</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, ‘The Splinter of Ice’, *The Seven Arts* 1.3 (January 1917), pp. 270-281.

Thompson in *M'lle New York*.<sup>74</sup> In *The Seven Arts*, James Oppenheim pays tribute to Whitman's style, as well as his content, in the poem 'America':

... the races are sieved through one another and lose their identity ...  
The solid and fixed flows and becomes a sea ...  
On Manhattan corners India prays,  
At the foot of the Pyramids Pittsburgh flames ...<sup>75</sup>

One could compare Whitman on the modernity and fluidity of urban mass immigration:

Superb-faced Manhattan!  
Comrade Americanos! To us, then at last the Orient comes.  
To us, my city,  
our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on opposite  
sides, to walk in the space between,  
To-day our Antipodes comes.<sup>76</sup>

According to Waldo Frank's (posthumously published) retrospective, Oppenheim's poems 'lapsed into free verse which uncomfortably revealed the superiority of Whitman's' – a judgement not perhaps entirely unprejudiced.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless it is possible to discern in *The Seven Arts* 'mystic nationalism' an attempt, whether conscious or not, to fulfil the predictions that the prophet, Whitman, laid out in *Democratic Vistas*. Rather than presenting American society as inexorably split, Whitman viewed it as heading towards a final stage of development: from town planning, and the getting of material prosperity he envisaged a third stage, the production of a new democratic art:

For the New World, indeed, after two grand stages of preparation-strata, I perceive that now a third stage, being ready for, (and without which the other two were useless,) with unmistakable signs appears ... The Third stage, rising out of the previous ones, to make them and all illustrious, I, now, for one, promulge, announcing a native expression-spirit, getting into form, adult, and through mentality, for these States, self-contain'd, different from others, more expansive, more rich and free, to be evidenced by original authors and poets to come, by

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<sup>74</sup> Alice Corbin Henderson, editorial, *Poetry* 1 (1912), pp. 87-91; Henry Mencken, 'Diagnosis of our Cultural Malaise', *The Smart Set* (February 1919), reproduced in *H. L. Mencken's Smart Set Criticism* (Washington: Regnery, 1987), ed. by William Nolte; James Huneker, *M'lle New York* 1.2 (23 August 1895), p.11, reproduced at <http://tinyurl.com/242fyz>, accessed 3 February 2009. Also see Percy Boynton, 'Whitman's Idea of the State', *New Republic* 7.84 (10 June 1916), p. 139; 'The Growth of the Whitman "Legend"', by John Harvey, *The Dial* 59 (June-December 1915), p. 12.

<sup>75</sup> Oppenheim, 'America', p. 465.

<sup>76</sup> Whitman, *Broadway Pageant*, in *The Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, ed. Louis Untermeyer (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), p. 258.

<sup>77</sup> Waldo Frank, *Memoirs*, p.91. Frank also describes an argument between himself and Oppenheim over editorial control of *The Seven Arts*.

American personalities, plenty of them, male and female, traversing the States, none excepted—and by native superlative tableaux and growths of language, songs, operas, orations, lectures, architecture—and by a sublime and serious Religious Democracy sternly taking command, dissolving the old, sloughing off surfaces, and from its own interior and vital principles, reconstructing, democratizing society<sup>78</sup>

The ‘native expression-spirit’, then, according to Rolland, and echoed by Oppenheim and Brooks, was the legacy of Homer-Whitman, the ‘task to come’ of *The Seven Arts*. As Whitman had expressed literary and artistic ideals arising from America’s heritage of democracy, so too did Oppenheim’s group, and in this magazine the figure of Whitman thus articulates the conjunction between the Classical and the Modern, commerce between the ‘echo of ancient joy’ and the new, polyglot, ‘superb Manhattan.’ In the words of Rolland, ‘The Old and New Worlds must bring forth the treasures of their souls’.<sup>79</sup>

#### *Creative trends – The Seven Arts addressing the immediate present*

*The Seven Arts*, having rejected the recent American past as unproductive, is concerned with present trends in art. But, though the fiction and poetry are strong, it is not notably experimental in style. There are short stories by (among others): Barry Benefield, Allen Upward, Katherine Baker, Edna Wahler McCourt, Elizabeth Stead Taber, Helen Hull, Wilbur Daniel Steele, Frederick Booth, J. D. Beresford, Edna Kenton, and S. N. Behrman. Of these, Hull and Steele had previously published stories in the mass-circulation journal *Harper’s Monthly*, McCourt had published poetry in *Poet Lore*, and Benefield in *Scribner’s*. Upward was British, a prolific and talented left-wing lawyer, poet, politician, and teacher, known in America for the publication of poetry in Ezra Pound’s volume *Des Imagistes* (1914), and the subject of a laudatory essay by Pound in *The New Age*.<sup>80</sup> He was also a regular writer for *The New Age* and *The New Freewoman*. Beresford, too, was already established as a British author, having published a full trilogy in an early ‘science fiction’ genre and also short stories in the early modernist journals *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review* of John Middleton Murry and Katharine Mansfield. Edna Kenton was a well-established

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<sup>78</sup> ‘Democratic Vistas’, in Untermeyer, ed., *Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, p. 849.

<sup>79</sup> Romain Rolland, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> Ezra Pound, ‘Allen Upward Serious’, *The New Age*, ed. A. R. Orage (23 April 1914), pp. 779-780.

journalist and author; a regular contributor, since 1903, of reviews and fiction to both *The Bookman* and *The Dial*.

Nevertheless, it would be foolish to make the mistake, called by Ann Ardis the ‘assumption that realism is conservative and that an avant-garde poetics constitutes a radical politics.’<sup>81</sup> Benefield’s telling short story of a black woman in a looted Southern town, burying her still-born baby, which could be described as ‘naturalist’ rather than concerned with formal experimentation in prose style, is one of the more startling early contributions, at least as far as its content is concerned. His short story which concerned the lives of prostitutes, ‘Daughters of Joy’, had recently appeared in *The Smart Set* and been the cause of a rift between the owner and the editor at that time, the (then) literary and artistic radical, Willard Huntington Wright.<sup>82</sup> S. N. Behrman was later to become well-known as a screen writer and a playwright whose Broadway plays perpetrated, through satire, an undeniably social message which is already recognisable in his story ‘The Song of Ariel’. It features a clerk whose fiancée breaks off their engagement because, as he is wholly supporting his invalid mother and educating his sister, he cannot afford yet to marry her. The sister is, by contrast, immersed in Shakespeare, and Ariel’s song ‘merrily, merrily’ illustrates the stark difference between her dream, the hope expressed in the song, and day-to-day economic reality.<sup>83</sup> The subject of this story and a number of other stories of poverty in America in *The Seven Arts* clearly lend support to the editorial idea that artistic achievement is incompatible with commercial necessity. ‘The Son’ by Katharine Baker is a stark short story of a baker whose wife dies in childbirth, and the child soon after. Booth’s story ‘Supers’ depicts a crowd waiting for possible work as theatre extras; one is chosen and as the rest are dispersed, ‘the scuffling of their feet more or less in unison sounds like a rope dragging’ in the chains of abject poverty.<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Taber’s ‘The Scar’ also depicts the social imprisonment of the poor white, this time in rural America as a man sells his wife, along with her disabled and disturbing child, to

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<sup>81</sup> Ann Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) Ch. 4, ‘Mapping the Middlebrow in Edwardian England’, p. 125.

<sup>82</sup> See M. K. Singleton, *H. L. Mencken and the American Mercury Adventure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962), p. 16 (n).

<sup>83</sup> S. N. Behrman, ‘The Song of Ariel’, *The Seven Arts* 2.1 (May 1917), pp. 13-23; for a discussion of the work of S. N. Behrman during the 1930s and 1940s, see Charles Kaplan, ‘S. N. Behrman: The Quandary of the Comic Spirit’, *College English* 11.6 (March 1950), pp. 317-323.

<sup>84</sup> Frederick Booth, ‘Supers’, *The Seven Arts* 1.2 (December 1916), p. 114.

a brute. Ultimately there is a fight between the brute and her husband, in which the child is inadvertently killed. The wife then returns, indifferently, to the home of the brute, having no choice and no reason to refuse. If these stories were, to *The Seven Arts* editors, examples of modernity then it was clearly associated with exposure of the effects of economic inequality exemplified in American writers Theodore Dreiser and Frank Norris.

It is evident from the foregoing, however, that these authors of short fiction did not rely on the magazine for publication or publicity, and one can further question Hoffman's claim that '*The Seven Arts* receives the credit for crystallizing in the public consciousness such American names as Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Eugene O'Neill, Randolph Bourne, John Reed, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and H. L. Mencken, and the Englishmen, D. H. Lawrence and J. D. Beresford'.<sup>85</sup> For 'the public consciousness' one would in any case need to reach beyond the circulation of *The Seven Arts*, which was, at Hoffman's optimistic estimate, about 5,000.<sup>86</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, as stated earlier, had a steadily growing reputation among critical circles since 1909 when he published *The Wine of the Puritans*. Furthermore, though Randolph Bourne's *Seven Arts* essays are particularly significant, his iconic essay 'Trans-National America' appeared not in *The Seven Arts* but six months before it was founded, in the long-running New England journal *Atlantic Monthly*, a journal well-regarded by the intellectual establishment. Mencken, too, was co-editing *The Smart Set* by then, and it was for this co-editorship, with George Jean Nathan, that his name had become prominent. It is indeed possible that Mencken's article was commissioned for *The Seven Arts* precisely *because* his 'American name' would help its circulation. John Dos Passos was a recent Harvard graduate; his contribution was an essay on contemporary Spanish life and its expression, among other things, in literature, commissioned as one of a series of essays about international youth culture.<sup>87</sup> The quintessentially American modernist fiction for which he is best known

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<sup>85</sup> Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, p.87.

<sup>86</sup> Figures from Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, pp. 89 and 29 put *The Seven Arts* at 5,000 and *The Masses* at 14,000. Rebecca Zurier gives a far more optimistic figure of 20,000-40,000 copies for *The Masses* in *Art For The Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics 1911-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), p.51, a discrepancy which Morrisson also notes (Morrisson, p. 248).

<sup>87</sup> Dos Passos, 'Young Spain', one of a series of articles on the radical youth of different countries. *Seven Arts* 2.4 (August 1917), p. 483.

did not appear until eight years later.<sup>88</sup> Eugene O'Neill's first (and only) short story was indeed published in *The Seven Arts*, an account of a suicide. He later prohibited any further reproduction of it 'because of its very personal nature', but reworked the character as Jimmy Tomorrow in *The Ice-Man Cometh*. But he had already had published, in 1914, a book of one-act plays and had also had two plays (*Bound East for Cardiff* and *Before Breakfast*) performed by the Provincetown Players.<sup>89</sup> Beresford, as stated above, was already well-published in the mainstream press.

From the list above Anderson and Lawrence may be singled out. Four of Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* stories appeared separately in *The Seven Arts*. Anderson's name had already been associated with *The Little Review*, *The Smart Set* and with *The Masses* (through his friendship with Floyd Dell) which had been founded six years before. Some of the *Winesburg* stories had appeared in those magazines, but these had their first airing in *The Seven Arts*.<sup>90</sup> Paul Boyer has written of *Winesburg* that it was part of a 'dramatic upheaval in taste and morals in post-war America, one of a series of publications which ignored pre-War morals and ideals'.<sup>91</sup> And indeed, Anderson's small-town stories combine uniquely American circumstances with a new kind of narrative interiority.<sup>92</sup> 'I believe' wrote Anderson to Waldo Frank, actively soliciting publication, 'they, as a whole, come a long step towards achieving what you are asking for in the article you ran in *The Seven Arts*'.<sup>93</sup> The article to which Anderson refers is Frank's review of his first novel, *Windy McPherson's Son*, in which Frank praises Anderson's work but predicts that his best is still to come, and that out of America's 'terrifying welter of steel and scarlet, a design must come. But it will come haltingly, laboriously ... with Mr. Anderson, the elemental movement begins to have form and direction; the force that causes it is

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<sup>88</sup> Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925).

<sup>89</sup> Ralph Sanborn and Barrett H. Clark, *A Bibliography of the Works of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Random House, 1931), p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> See Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio: Authoritative Texts, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), note to p. 141, though some were rejected by Mencken possibly due to the possibility of their censorship.

<sup>91</sup> Paul Boyer, *Purity in Print: The Vice-Society Movement and Book Censorship in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 70.

<sup>92</sup> See detailed discussion of American modernity in Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America*, Ch. 1 and 3.

<sup>93</sup> Sherwood Anderson, letter to Waldo Frank, 14 November 1916, *The Letters of Sherwood Anderson*, ed. by Howard Mumford Jones and Walter B. Rideout (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), p. 4; Frank's article: 'Emerging Greatness', *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), p. 78.



being borne into the air.’<sup>94</sup> Even so, some of the other *Winesburg* stories were published in *The Smart Set*.

Despite its emphasis on American resurgence, *The Seven Arts* continued to publish fiction by a number of European authors, and in 1917 included D. H. Lawrence’s early stories, ‘Mortal Coil’ and ‘The Thimble’.<sup>95</sup> Set among the English upper middle class, ‘The Thimble’ is experimentally symbolic and inconclusive: an old engraved thimble found by a woman becomes a key to a new understanding of her husband, recently home from the War. Lawrence’s later novella ‘The Ladybird’ clearly reworks some of these ideas. Lawrence himself expressed a wish to ‘escape’ to America during World War I, though by the time he could afford to go to the United States his enthusiasm had diminished, and he eventually chose to move to Mexico.<sup>96</sup> In a 1916 letter he independently corroborates, in similar metaphors of growth, renaissance, and organicism, *The Seven Arts*’ idea of modernity: ‘America, being so much worse, falser, further gone than England, is nearer to freedom ... America has dry-rotted to the point where the final seed of the new is almost left ready to sprout.’<sup>97</sup> Maintaining growth and rebirth metaphors throughout *The Seven Arts*, James Oppenheim wrote: ‘Extremely significant for our future, then, is the emergence in America of the so-called “new poetry.” From the older, New England standpoint, it lacks refinement, gracefulness and respectability. But it is a vital growth from below upwards.’<sup>98</sup> In contrast to the fiction, most of the poetry and some of the short dramatic pieces in the magazine are clearly chosen for their form, in accordance with Oppenheim’s view that ‘free verse is an attempt to synthesize the values of both prose and classic poetry, producing a third medium, a child who resembles both parents, but is neither’.<sup>99</sup>

Oppenheim’s article attacks the idea of “‘Lazy” Verse’, which had been the title of a previous article by Max Eastman, disparaging free verse and its authors, which had

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<sup>94</sup> Frank, ‘Emerging Greatness’, p. 73.

<sup>95</sup> D. H. Lawrence, ‘The Thimble’, *The Seven Arts* 1.5 (March 1917), 435-448.

<sup>96</sup> Detailed in Armin Arnold, *D. H. Lawrence and America* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), pp. 23, 132 forward.

<sup>97</sup> D. H. Lawrence, Letter to Catherine Carswell, 7 November 1916, quoted in Arnold, *D. H. Lawrence and America*, p. 26.

<sup>98</sup> Oppenheim, editorial, *The Seven Arts* 1.2 (December 1916), p. 155.

<sup>99</sup> Oppenheim, “‘Lazy” Verse’, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), pp. 66-72.

appeared in *The New Republic* of September 1916.<sup>100</sup> Eastman's own organ, *The Masses*, is of course known for its incisive, sharply left-wing stance, but it did not promote experimental literature: according to Leslie Fishbein, 'the artistic rebellion led by *The Masses* radicals aimed at a revolution in content, not in form.'<sup>101</sup> The same issue of *The Seven Arts* also prints an answer, from Eastman to Oppenheim, arguing (not very credibly, even then) that many poets wrote free verse because it was 'easier' to write than multi-rhythmic, multi-faceted rhyming or regular verse. Oppenheim's florid, Whitman-like, biblical, and patriotic declamations stand, throughout the first volume, in flamboyant opposition to this view. 'O thou America, wherefore is my heart glowing with thee? ... What has the Ancient of Days to do with thee, O adolescent America?'<sup>102</sup>

The second volume of *The Seven Arts* includes a slightly higher proportion of modern poetry than the first; poets such as Babette Deutsch, Hortense Flexner, Helen Hoyt, Alfred Kreymborg, and Richard Aldington, are represented, though by 1917 none of these poets was perhaps quite a new 'discovery'. The contributions of the well-regarded, prolific contemporary poet Maxwell Bodenheim are two unconventional allegorical dramatic pieces. A work by the very well established Amy Lowell, entitled 'Guns as Keys: and the Great Gate Swings' intersects Japan, in free verse, with an America expressed mainly in 'polyphonic prose', a rhythmic prose form which Lowell claimed to have invented, having adapted it from the French poet Paul Fort, and which she felt represented the 'speed and vividness' of modernity.<sup>103</sup> The poem in fact describes the effects of financial commerce. It is a representation of the first

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<sup>100</sup> The discussion was not confined to these two magazines. "Free Verse" had also been the subject of an ongoing conversation in *The New York Times* to which Oppenheim had contributed articles. See Oppenheim, 'Democracy in Verse and Art', *New York Times* 30 January 1916, in which he argues for the appreciation of Amy Lowell, Edgar Lee Masters, Ezra Pound, and Walt Whitman; for Eastman's opposite view see Max Eastman, 'Lazy Verse', originally published in *The New Republic*, in Max Eastman, *Journalism Versus Art* (New York: Knopf, 1916) pp. 87-106.

<sup>101</sup> See Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of The Masses, 1911-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 184 and the surrounding discussion.

<sup>102</sup> Oppenheim, 'America', *The Seven Arts* 1.5 (March 1917), pp. 462-471, p. 463.

<sup>103</sup> For Lowell's own account of this poem, and a description of her concept of polyphonic prose, see the introduction to her own collection *Can Grande's Castle* (New York: MacMillan, 1918), pp. x-xv, and also an article in *Poetry Review of America* 1.5 (September 1916), p. 72. In *Amy Lowell: American Modern*, ed. Munich and Bradshaw (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp. 103-119, Andrew Thacker's article 'Unrelated Beauty: Amy Lowell, Polyphonic Prose, and the Imagist City' points out the incontrovertible relationship between a number of different types of polyphony (in Pound, John Gould Fletcher, Stein, etc) and the idea of modernity, and Lowell's statement that she was using a new form derived from 'the greater speed and vividness demanded today of all the arts'.

American marine trade foray to Japan, beginning with the landing in Japan in 1853. It echoes, in both form and content, the way that in the course of enforcing mutual trade, American civilization absorbs and regurgitates the culture of a nation.<sup>104</sup> Lowell incorporated (unacknowledged until 1918) an excerpt from Seichi Naruse's 'Young Japan' which had earlier been published in the April issue of *The Seven Arts*. Naruse's essay details the frustration, confusion, and despair of one Japanese youth in the process of assimilating, too quickly, the new spirit of an Occidental culture after thousands of years of uninterrupted Oriental tradition.<sup>105</sup> Lowell's poem highlights this confusion, tempering the suicide inscription of a student (from Naruse) with scenes indicating American acquisitiveness: 'a locomotive in pay for a Whistler; telegraph wires buying a revolution; weights and measures and Audubon's birds in exchange for fear ... Artists and philosophers lost in the hour-glass sand pouring through an open gate.'<sup>106</sup> It is a modernist poem representing modern conflict; Naruse's article is one of the series of 'Young' essays: 'Young America' (Brooks, December 1916), 'Young Japan' (Naruse, April 1917), 'Young Spain' (Dos Passos, August 1917), 'Youngest Ireland' (Padraic Colum, September 1916) and 'Young India' (Lajpat Rai, October 1917), and follow Bourne's 1913 collection *Youth And Life*: 'Youth at its best is this constant susceptibility to the new, this constant eagerness to try experiments.'<sup>107</sup> All these articles highlight a spiritual and cultural division between the generations of one century and another, and indicate collectively that Oppenheim and Frank, involved in a forward-looking commerce with the immediate present, saw the modern resurgence of American culture as part of an inexorable world-wide movement.

Though my primary emphasis here is on the literary and editorial, rather than the political, content of *The Seven Arts* one cannot ignore the way *The Seven Arts* responded to the immediate circumstances of World War I and to the surrounding climate of opinion. John Dewey, along with William James and Josiah Royce, is credited with having been the main proponent of pragmatism, the American philosophical school of thought which traces back its roots to Aristotle in its emphasis

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<sup>104</sup> Lowell, 'Guns as Keys: and the Great Gate Swings', *The Seven Arts* 2.4 (August 1917), pp. 428-451.

<sup>105</sup> Seichi Naruse, 'Young Japan', *The Seven Arts* 1.6 (April 1917), pp. 616-626.

<sup>106</sup> Lowell, 'Guns as Keys: and the Great Gate Swings', p. 450.

<sup>107</sup> Bourne, *Youth and Life*, pp. 10-11.

on that which is observable by the senses. Van Wyck Brooks' emphasis on 'experience' as a proper basis for creative writing has its origins in this same discipline, though he nevertheless decries 'popular pragmatism', by which he is likely to have meant works such as William James' *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking; Popular Lectures On Philosophy* (1907) or a number of other works published in America during the previous decade. Brooks' Harvard background, though, would have brought him into contact with the theories of Royce, James, and George Santayana, whose work *The Life of Reason* has been named, by Henry Levinson, as one of the earliest statements of pragmatism. Levinson writes:

The irony is that, with *The Life of Reason*, Santayana commissions the very movement in philosophy that Dewey and his disciples will quickly come to champion and dominate, and that Santayana will eventually criticize with some severity. Philosophy in *The Life of Reason* is the kind of inquiry that prepares citizens or their leaders for concrete social or cultural action.<sup>108</sup>

It was, indeed, in the name of pragmatism that Dewey eventually expressed support for American World War I participation.<sup>109</sup>

The liberal arguments for and against American entry into World War I were complex, played out largely in *The New Republic* where Dewey and Randolph Bourne were regular contributors. Bourne has become something of a romantic legend, due partly to his early death, his physical difference, and what is viewed as his implacable pacifism in the face of impending War. Gary Bullert, in an extensive summary of Dewey's political philosophy, points out that Bourne's anti-Dewey pacifism (though it signalled the end of *The Seven Arts*) had by no means been consistent:

At the beginning of the Great War, Bourne reveled in the titanic clash of national cultures. He sounded like anything but a pacifist. Defending cultural particularism, he stated that "the war from this point of view may be a vast liberating movement, clearing the way for this more

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<sup>108</sup> Henry Levinson, *Santayana, Pragmatism, and the Spiritual Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 120.

<sup>109</sup> Dewey, *The New Republic*: 'Conscience and Compulsion', 11 (14 July 1917), pp. 297-298 ('The remedy is to connect conscience with the forces that are moving in another direction'); 'The Future of Pacifism', 11 (28 July 1917), 358-360 ('I can but feel that the pacifists wasted rather than invested their potentialities when they turned so vigorously to opposing entrance into a war which was already all but universal'); 'What America Will Fight For' 12 (18 August 1917), 68-69 ('this sense of a job to be done'); 'Conscription of Thought', 12 (1 Sept 1917), 128-130 ('without this experience we shall miss the contribution which the war has to make to the creation of a united America'); 'War Activities For Civilians' 12 (1 Sept 1917), 139-140 ('National Service Handbook ... informed by discriminative intelligence').

conscious and intense world. . . . The tendencies which they are working at are exactly those which hold the brightest promise for twentieth-century Western civilization.”

And indeed it must be observed that the idea of War as ‘cleansing the way’ and ‘liberating’ is more in line with Futurism than with pacifism. Bullert goes on to attribute a measure of paranoia to Bourne, implying that his disagreement with Dewey was not so much ideological as personal. He bears out this idea with reference to a number of essays, by both men, in *The New Republic*:

Until America's full belligerency Dewey and Bourne did not confront one another publicly on the war issue. Like Dewey, Bourne spoke of the war as an incomparable opportunity for America to discover its national ideal on the foundation of a stern realism. In July 1916 he seconded Dewey's opposition to the Roosevelt-Wood plan for universal military service. Though Dewey deflated pacifism, wrote a damaging critique of German culture, and suggested conditions for America's involvement, Bourne did not repudiate him or the *New Republic* before April 1917. His disillusion with Dewey may have originated from other sources than the war issue itself. Bourne considered himself to be an outcast around the *New Republic*. He disapproved of its preoccupation with political rather than cultural interests, a preoccupation that relegated his pieces to the back pages. Bourne imagined that he had enemies on the staff.<sup>110</sup>

According to his own *New Republic* contributions, Bourne had been, like a number of Americans at the time (including the influential Henry Mencken, who was German by ancestry and expressed German sympathies throughout the war) a German sympathiser since he had travelled in Europe in 1913.<sup>111</sup> His first anti-war piece in *The Seven Arts* for June 1917, ‘The War and the Intellectuals’ was partly in reply to an article in the May edition, ‘In a Time of National Hesitation’ in which Dewey writes of his own (albeit ‘unbidden and unforeseen’) impression that America, in joining a war that it could not avoid, could prove itself ‘a new body and a new spirit in the world.’ Bourne’s reply is directed as much against the ‘intellectuals’ as against their support for war, and in fact acknowledges Dewey’s earlier insights, but it is possible that Dewey’s recent piece had the effect of moving Bourne’s opinion away from the ‘easy’ ‘pragmatic’ approach which he condemns (the ‘intellectuals in the fighting countries had only to rationalize and justify what their country was already doing’) and towards the much more challenging idea that ‘they could have used their energy to force a just peace or at least to devise other means than war for carrying

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<sup>110</sup> Both citations from Gary Bullert, *The Politics of John Dewey* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1983), p.61.

<sup>111</sup> For example Bourne, ‘American Use for German Ideals’, *New Republic* 4.44 (4 September 1915), p. 117.

through American policy.<sup>112</sup> Dewey's response to war was in any case hardly enthusiastic: in August 1917 he wrote in *The New Republic* of the response of the American people to a 'sense of a job to be done, a hard job, but one which had to be done so that it could be done with.' His subject in this article was how best the American government could ensure support for a war which was in his opinion inevitable, by regarding it as a 'workmanlike performance in behalf of a necessary task.'<sup>113</sup> Bourne's opinion in 'The War and the Intellectuals' was a response to his own perceived need for intellectuals to have an active and contentious response to War, rather than a passive view on its inevitability.

Having used the term 'commerce' here broadly, to articulate a discussion of the way that *The Seven Arts* addresses and incorporates past, present, and future culture, it is worth reiterating here that what has emerged from the above discussion is that in the course of its essays and fiction, *The Seven Arts* also addresses the world of American capitalism through its support of Brooks' notion that American art and American business life are incompatible. This is clearly a difficult, if not impossible, position; in the course of this and the next three chapters it is clear that while most little magazines of the time shared a common dislike of the effects of money, much of their organisational energy had to be directed towards acquiring it. In common with other publications of the time, though, *The Seven Arts* also recognises the significance of modern technology to the early twentieth century, a technology which, largely, allowed America to wield commercial power.

### *The Machinery of Commerce*

The significance of machines (or the 'machine age') was well-recognized in the early twentieth-century culture in a country which was already internationally perceived, and was beginning to perceive itself, as the most technologically advanced in the world. Lisa Steinman has produced an exhaustive and fascinating account of the relationship between American modernism and American technology (which she is

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<sup>112</sup> Bourne, 'The War and the Intellectuals', *The Seven Arts* 2.2 (June 1917), pp. 133-146.

<sup>113</sup> John Dewey, 'What America Will Fight For', *The New Republic* (18 August 1917), pp. 68-69.

careful to distinguish from ‘science’) in *Made In America*.<sup>114</sup> Brooks, as we have seen, viewed commerce as the antithesis of Art, and also technology as inevitably associated with commerce. He amplifies the idea in his *Seven Arts* essay ‘Our Awakeners’ (reprinted from *America’s Coming-of-Age*) in which he sees the ‘destiny of the working class’ to be ‘accepting machinery and more machinery and still more machinery as a *fait accompli*, and ... riding about the country in Ford cars, on Sundays, for example, with their mouths open.’<sup>115</sup> With reference to European modernism in general, Steinman points out that ‘the admiration of a machine aesthetic was a prominent feature of the modernist sensibility’.<sup>116</sup> She draws attention to Brooks’ difficulty in reconciling his negative view of commerce with the idea that America should be renewed through the ‘common man’:

Yet even as he described the organic community he believed would cure American ills, Brooks could not imagine the common man in America creating the culture he desired, nor did his ideas take account of the actual beliefs of most Americans. In short, Brooks’s criticisms of business and commerce were not likely to appeal to the man on the street<sup>117</sup>

Steinman suggests that this ambivalence towards commerce, and commercial technology, joins Brooks with William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens as a group who wished to identify with the proletariat while at the same time producing work and ideas of a type, quality, and complexity which was accessible only to an intellectual minority. Poetry written by the common man was at the time rarely published, though *The New Masses* attempted (some years later) to publish poetry written by workers which expressed suitable political views.<sup>118</sup> Waldo Frank, echoing Brooks, wrote in 1919:

With swift logic, the machine became the god of the American world – both had a common parentage in Europe. And with equal logic, the machine took over the lands of the pioneer to be its chief domain ... Thus the new external world – the industrial world which America had created now drove the American out into an endless exteriorization. A sucking monster,

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<sup>114</sup> Lisa Steinman, *Made In America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>115</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, ‘Our Awakeners’ in *The Seven Arts* 2.2 (June 1917), p. 245.

<sup>116</sup> Steinman, *Made in America*, p. 37. The ‘machine aesthetic’ is of course a key feature of the Futurist movement, which was not until later recognised as an individual movement in America, something on which I expand in the concluding chapter of this thesis. In *The Seven Arts*, 291, and *The Soil*, the machine also plays a central role. In a number of ways the different attitudes displayed by each magazine to the technology-based American twentieth century are fundamental to an understanding of the general relationship of American thought to the conditions of urban modernity.

<sup>117</sup> Steinman, *Made in America*, p. 19.

<sup>118</sup> For details see Jonathan Sanders, ‘Mike Gold and Proletarian Literature’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005).

which as it sucked swelled larger and larger and so sucked more. Feed the machine of life.  
Do not stop. Open your veins!

Industrialism swept the American land and made it rich. Broke in on the American soul and made it poor.<sup>119</sup>

Frank, therefore, was of the opinion that machinery was anti-art, that the rise of mechanization had led to a ‘sagging, uncreative world’, and that it was part of what inhibited America from the production of great art.<sup>120</sup>

In an essay entitled ‘Art, Religion, and Science’, James Oppenheim actually expresses a contrasting view. He acknowledges the achievements of science and technology and addresses what he sees as prejudice:

There is noticeable among many of our American artists, poets and religious-minded men a deep distrust of science, even, at times, an anti-scientific spirit ... And for the scientist they have even harsher names: he is a mechanistic intellectual, he is uncreative, he is a standpatter taking the world as he finds it and breaking it up into diagrams and laws; he lacks intuition ... In short, he is like his offspring, the machine.

There is clearly some similarity between Oppenheim’s idea that the machine is the ‘offspring’ of mankind and the idea expressed in *291* that the machine is man’s ‘daughter without a mother’, which we will see in Chapter 2. Oppenheim recommends in this piece, though, an acknowledgement and assimilation of technology, which he regards as the offshoot of science, into art; although in the way Steinman describes as common to the writers of his era, he groups together scientists Harvey, Darwin, and Freud with inventors Langley and Zeppelin:

[N]o true modern would give up the gains of our new sun-strong world for the dark beauty-haunted miasma of the pre-scientific era. A question one might put to artists and religious men is this: Is your faith in art, or in religion, strong enough to meet the clear unflinching gaze of science?<sup>121</sup>

Oppenheim’s opinion is thus at odds with that of Brooks and Frank. Besides the admission and acceptance of technology into the arts, his reference to ‘the true modern’ is clearly significant here. Consider also his final statement:

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<sup>119</sup> Waldo Frank, *Our America* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), pp. 44-45.

<sup>120</sup> Frank, *Our America*, p. 45.

<sup>121</sup> Oppenheim, ‘Art, Religion, and Science’, *The Seven Arts* 2.2 (June 1917), pp. 229, 231, 234. Clearly the ‘scientific’ basis of Freud’s experiments has later been demonstrated to be questionable.



The future for the artist then lies not in rejecting science, but in absorbing it, and above all, in gaining the scientific attitude ... The trouble is that our artists are conservative, if not reactionary. They are looking to the past, they are seeing what once produced art, and they fear that art will die in any other sort of world. What they must do now is to look to the present, face reality as it is ... converting knowledge into vision, and the intangible and abstract into concrete forms.<sup>122</sup>

Though at the time Futurism was not necessarily known, in America, as a separate ‘movement’ but rather as a general term for modern art, the essence of Oppenheim’s statement clearly recalls the Futurist manifesto. Non-specific Futurism was, as will be shown in the next chapter, also characteristic of *291*. Contrasting Brooks’ and Oppenheim’s views reveals *The Seven Arts* as a site of tension or ambivalence, which is also perhaps one of the defining features of the early stages of American modernism. Ann Ardis suggests, for instance, that perhaps ‘one of the real strengths of literary modernism lies in its ability to incorporate its opposites’.<sup>123</sup> The fact that there is significant reference to technology throughout *The Seven Arts* positions it in Hegeman’s and North’s emerging ‘modernist moment’ despite Brooks’ and Frank’s rejection of modernism in their later work.<sup>124</sup> Machinery is very much a part of *The Seven Arts* conversation with the present, though its presence is usually expressed in the rhetorical abstract. There is little to suggest convergence or incorporation of the arts with technology other than in the inclusion of Macgowan’s article on film, which we have noted above in connection with aesthetics. In contrast with a number of the *Seven Arts* articles, the commerce of Macgowan’s article with the recent past recommends the incorporation of industrial and technological development into art, a fusion rather than an opposition.

### *The Market in Intellectual Commodities*

So far in this chapter the notion of ‘commerce’ has been used to describe the way that the magazine rejects, incorporates, or addresses the recent past, present developments, and the immediate future, and I have also shown how *The Seven Arts* group address the notion of commerce via their critique of American culture. Although *The Seven*

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<sup>122</sup> Oppenheim, as above, pp. 233-234.

<sup>123</sup> Ann Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict*, p. 145.

<sup>124</sup> See for instance Brooks, *On Literature Today* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1941), pp. 17-18, where Brooks writes of the ‘death-drive’ represented by writers such as Joyce, Eliot, and Gertrude Stein: ‘if, with their technical virtues, they destroy our faith, our will to make the world worth living in, we cannot let their influence go unchallenged.’

*Arts* is not unique in either its wish to slough off that which it recognises as a sterile and prescriptive nineteenth-century ‘genteel’ intellectual culture, or indeed to fly in the face of puritanical censorship, it is the most fervent expression of the desire for a regenerative American culture which unites both artistic and political ideals. And its consistent and repeated expression of the opposition between the art world and the business world is fully interlinked with its ideological and historical commerce.

There are, of course, more straightforward senses in which any magazine is a commercial commodity in spite of any ivory-tower ideals it may harbour. First, its material and visual design appeals to a certain market, and second, it often carries advertising.<sup>125</sup> The appearance of the journal, as will be shown shortly, was fairly conventional in comparison with certain radical journals of the arts such as *The Little Review* and *291*, but more adventurous than, say, *The Dial* or *Poetry*. Each issue was framed front and back by boxed advertisements. Each issue of the magazine in Volume One was compiled in a similar order: approximately one hundred pages with short stories, drama, and poetry in the first half, editorial matter in the middle (as opposed to the more usual arrangement of editorials on the final pages in other, larger-circulation magazines and in *Poetry*), and essays and reviews in the second. From issue number two of Volume two (June 1917) ‘The Seven Arts Chronicle’, a two-column, small-print section reviewing current events and publications, was added at the back. There was also a general change in emphasis from that date, which indicated the group’s increasing concern over American participation in World War One. The anti-war articles of Randolph Bourne became prominent, placed near the beginning of the issues for July, August, September, and October 1917.<sup>126</sup>

Each issue, largely well-organized and consistent, was printed on good paper, featuring a rather elegant minimalist cover design with a double contrasting stripe near the spine. Though the design remained constant, the subdued colours varied from issue to issue (as illustrated above), signifying interesting variety within the qualitative consistency. They are not uniformly printed, the stripes being in a different

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<sup>125</sup> Very few magazines in that period, that I know of, carried no advertising at all.

<sup>126</sup> See Frank, *Memoir*, for his own version of how this happened. Silet has a whole chapter on this part of the history, as does Blake. *The Seven Arts* is often seen in relation to *The New Republic* and *The Masses* as a radical pacifist publication in a factional context, and its critics have taken centre stage.

position, giving the impression of individual hand printing (though they were sent each month to a printer) which furthers a certain ‘hand-made’ appeal. The cover is compared (page 82, figure 1) with the cover design of *Poetry* which is clearly more traditionally arranged, with its contents announcing themselves on the cover and its florid logos of the winged Pegasus and the sheaved scroll.

The magazine, after some discussion, was produced without illustrations. Therefore, wrote Waldo Frank to their original choice of artist, Robert Jones, ‘the entire spirit and color of what we are driving at must ... go into that cover’. Jones, a young Harvard graduate who was later to make his name in stage set design for Eugene O’Neill and the Provincetown Players, eventually declined and recommended Charles Rollo Peters, a San Francisco-based, Whistler-influenced landscape artist whose commercially successful later paintings were invariably of crumbling Spanish colonial ruins in Mexico.<sup>127</sup> The magazine cover depicts a medallion depicting a slave carrying a lamp, possibly one of the slaves of Philologia described in the ‘Seven Liberal Arts’ of the fifth-century writer Martianus Capella.<sup>128</sup> THE SEVEN ARTS is printed in letters reminiscent of those carved in of ancient stone, like Sumerian cuneiform. So are combined ideas of the classical arts, the history of learning, and perhaps even the Old Testament metaphor of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom (‘Wisdom builded her house; she has hewn out her seven pillars’) with the regenerative powers of the lamp, conjuring up a new spirit, lighting up the darkness of the American artistic scene, and incorporating tradition into the new in what might now be regarded as a modernist combination.<sup>129</sup> The marketing appeal, like that of *Poetry*, is clearly to the classically-educated echelons of American society, but the acknowledgement of the old in the service of the new is therefore represented not only in the editorials and the textual content but carefully incorporated from the outset into the cover of the magazine. (See Figure 1, p. 82).

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<sup>127</sup> Letter, Waldo Frank to Robert Jones, 13 Aug 1916 (New York Public Library, James Oppenheim Papers, box 1); see <http://www.kargesfineart.com/charles-rollo-peters-biography.html> for brief biography of Peters.

<sup>128</sup> See Nicolas Murray Butler and Andrew Fleming West, *Alcuin and the Rise of the Christian Schools* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1892) and Theodore Haarhof, *Schools of Gaul: A Study of Pagan and Christian Education in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920).

<sup>129</sup> This idea was of course given eminent form in 1919 on the publication of Eliot’s ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’.

It is clear from Frank's and Oppenheim's preparatory letters that they were aiming for an influential and possibly wealthy subscription list, partly generated by their Editorial Board (though Oppenheim wrote later that he did not remember any actual meetings of this board). Frank wrote:

in the matter of the lists, for instance, personal letters need to go forth to make the folks work. I am writing scores of them. But, of course, I am leaving the Board to you – your better prestige and fitness to ask those whom you can. Are you asking [David] Mannes for a huge list of musical people? He knows lots. Some suggestions for you, that might have slipped your mind, are Marion Reedy, Mrs. Mowbray-Clark, Ben Huebsch, Traubel, Frank Harris' list of subscribers to his biography of O Wilde<sup>130</sup>

The advertisements in *The Seven Arts* also provide the present-day reader with a specific context for the magazine and its readership. The magazine's editorial group appear, however, to have been against the general growth in consumer advertising. In his editorial for October 1917, for instance, James Oppenheim writes:

THE SEVEN ARTS was brought into being because America had so few periodicals which are not mere extensions of their advertising and business departments.<sup>131</sup>

Ironically enough, this was part of the text of his final plea for subscriptions when the magazine funds were withdrawn. Oppenheim had, however, recognised a trend in American consumer culture which Richard Ohmann has traced back to the 1890s:

In the late 1890s, several monthly magazines attained circulations of five hundred thousand to a million, far larger than any had reached before. At ten cents an issue or a dollar a year, they sold for less than it cost to produce and distribute them ... Advertising agencies, previously little more than space brokers, mediated this process by helping invent brand names and logos, devising slogans, writing copy, providing visuals, doing market research.<sup>132</sup>

Though *The Seven Arts* was not dependent on its advertisers, and is unlike the mass circulation journals to which Ohmann largely refers here, it nevertheless carried regular adverts as part of the magazine's overall structure. In the absence of complete subscription lists, the advertisements are indicative of the likely readership. While another contemporary, 'popular socialist magazine', *The Masses*, displayed to a similar readership (at least to begin with) intentionally worthy advertising for utility

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<sup>130</sup> Letter, Waldo Frank to James Oppenheim, 8 August 1916 (New York Public Library, James Oppenheim Papers, box 1). Marion Reedy was a publisher of some influence, owning the huge-circulation *Reedy's Mirror*, Ben Huebsch a well-to-do publisher, Mrs Mowbray-Clarke (nee Mary Horgan) the wife of an artist and the owner of the Sunwise Turn bookshop, Horace Traubel the detailed biographer and one-time close friend of Walt Whitman, then a liberal journalist with many connections. David Mannes was one of the founders of the Colored Music Settlement School in 1912.

<sup>131</sup> James Oppenheim, 'To the Friends of the Seven Arts', *The Seven Arts* 2.6 (October 1917), p. 671.

<sup>132</sup> Richard Ohmann, from 'Knowing/Creating Wants', in the collection *Making and Selling Culture* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), ed. by Richard Ohmann, p. 230.

work clothing and community holidays, *The Seven Arts* predominantly advertised a more elite selection of books, publishing houses, literary agents, and, prominently, *The New Republic*.<sup>133</sup> *The Masses* advertised lectures on women's suffrage; *The Seven Arts* advertised books on spiritualism and lectures on poetry. Morrisson has documented the changes in *The Masses*' advertising and cover art policy as it attempted to maintain a share of the market that he describes as 'a broadly based oppositional counterpublic sphere'; *The Seven Arts* is quite openly aimed at a readership which was possibly consciously 'bohemian' but certainly wealthy.<sup>134</sup> *The Seven Arts* cost 25 cents, *The Masses* 5 cents. *The Masses* advertises wholesale co-operatives, the Rand School Restaurant, puncture-proof bicycle tyres, and free suits and overcoats in reward for a year's subscription, in spite of its being aimed not only at the 'doctrinaire' socialist audience but also at the type of people who read *The Seven Arts*.<sup>135</sup> *The Seven Arts* advertises Keppel's engravings (Frederick Keppel being the first dealer in fine art engravings in America), and the studio of Arnold Genthe, expensive and exclusive portrait photographer.<sup>136</sup>

The second issue of the magazine, November 1916, printed a full-page advertisement for *The New Republic* which asked 'Are you a highbrow?'

We claim that it is possible to be interesting and entertaining and still not publish interviews with Eva Tanguay, early anecdotes of Jess Willard, "red-blooded" fiction white satin "confessions", hints for housewives, or appreciations of Charlie Chaplin's feet.

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<sup>133</sup> Quoted in Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia*, p.18; see Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism* for the advertising policy of *The Masses*.

<sup>134</sup> Morrisson, p. 170.

<sup>135</sup> Fishbein, p. 18.

<sup>136</sup> Paul Strand's article, 'Photography' in *The Seven Arts* 2.2 (August 1917), pp. 524-525, does not single out Genthe for praise (Strand mentions Steichen, Cheesier, Eugene, as examples), but does however make the case, which still needed to be made, for photography as an art in itself, and for American photography - 'given to the world through "Camera Work"' (the Stieglitz magazine in which Genthe's work did appear) as unique to, and expressive of, America. This does not mean that Genthe's portraits were inferior. At the time of the advertisement he had already taken remarkable photographs of Chicago and its inhabitants and a unique documentary of the Chicago earthquake in 1906, and he has been included in studies of Progressive Era photographers whose work and ethos corresponded to those of the Ashcan school of American painting (see for instance Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). By 1917, however, Genthe's portfolio included many exclusive portraits of the wealthy and/or famous, including the author Jack London (who died in 1916), the dancer Anna Pavlova (1915), the actress Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske (several from 1899 on), and a much-reproduced portrait of the writer Edna St. Vincent Millay. In terms of wealthy patronage, Lady Duff Gordon (1915, 1919, *et al*) was a regular customer. Images from the Arnold Genthe collection can be seen at the Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/092-b.html> (accessed 11 February 2009).

If you agree with us try a four months' Acquaintance Subscription. Many things can happen in four months. You may yourself begin to say, "I've noticed in *The New Republic* ..." And then somebody else can escape to the movies.<sup>137</sup>

The text exploits the idea that readers professing the opposite secretly wish to become part of a highbrow minority, and it names real examples of the lowbrow subject matter which they are invited to reject. During the post-war period and the onset of the 'flapper' culture both Eva Tanguay and Charles Chaplin became recognised and cited as great artists across a broad range of critical publications. 'Eva Tanguay is the soul of America at its most desperate eagle flight' wrote Aleister Crowley a little later in *The International*.<sup>138</sup> Even in *The Seven Arts* the Macgowan articles (discussed above) indicate a change from the idea that the movies were merely escapist entertainment, although American critics generally were much later than their European counterparts in recognising the distinct characteristics which comprise cinematic art.<sup>139</sup> Such advertisements were designed to appeal to a latent intellectual snob, to the particular highbrow, in fact, which Brooks claimed to reject.

Other advertisements which illustrate the closeness of the distribution circle, and its rather particular intellectuality, can be singled out for comment. One such is for a small school run by Miss Margaret Naumburg and Miss Irene Tasker. In fact, this was a pioneering educational venture: Irene Tasker, besides being Montessori trained, was a lifelong exponent and teacher of the Alexander technique, a holistic mind/body improvement technique pioneered by F. M. Alexander from 1895 and now highly regarded as one of a number of alternative therapies. Margaret Naumburg had been a graduate pupil of John Dewey and Beatrice and Sidney Webb; she, too, was Montessori trained and developed psychological techniques leading to the discipline which would eventually become known as art therapy.<sup>140</sup> The school was named the Walden school, clearly inspired by the ethos of Thoreau's work. Importantly, in terms of the closeness of environment that *The Seven Arts* indicates, Naumburg was at the

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<sup>137</sup> Back cover, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916).

<sup>138</sup> Aleister Crowley, 'Drama be Damned! An Appreciation of Eva Tanguay', *The International* (April 1918), p. 127.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Myron Lounsbury, *The Origins of American Film Criticism 1909-1939* (New York: Arno, 1973), as compared to Richard Abel, *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology 1907-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>140</sup> See Sandra Packard, 'The History of Art Therapy Education' in *Art Therapy and Art Education*, 33.4 (April 1980), pp. 10-13.

time very recently married to Waldo Frank. Given these kinds of personal connections, coupled with the likely target readership as addressed by this advertising, cultural regeneration as envisaged by James Oppenheim and the group was in the hands of an educated, and often well-to-do, minority.

## *Conclusion*

Ultimately the romance of *The Seven Arts* ended when its funds were withdrawn. 'It is strange' wrote Sherwood Anderson to Waldo Frank in the September of 1917, 'that in discussing the dangers to *Seven Arts* we never thought of the possibility of her ladyship running away with the moneybags. That is bad, but maybe it is good too. Perhaps a magazine, like a person, has to meet these blows and survive to be worth a damn.'<sup>141</sup> Within its supporting environment the magazine was not allowed pacifist principles – its anti-war stance was considered anti-American and the sponsor Annette Rankine, under general sociological and political pressure, withdrew its subsidy and did not renew their contract. Randolph Bourne's contributions 'The War and the Intellectuals', 'Below the Battle', and 'A War Diary' were a protest against the War, the American government, and the so-called intellectuals and pragmatists who had publicly justified and supported both.<sup>142</sup>

Thus the writers, funded by the money of the class to which they objected, succumbed to the exact kind of pressure which they felt inhibited the American creative force - they needed to earn a living. Apart from James Oppenheim, who appears to have been expressly excluded, many of the group went on to write for *The Dial*. Scofield Thayer (who bought *The Dial* in 1919) had tried in 1917 to buy *The Seven Arts* in order to use it as a vehicle for the wider circulation of Bourne's essays, but according to Waldo Frank's *Memoir*, Oppenheim refused to abandon or collectivise its editorial control. The reliability of Frank's *Memoir* is unclear, however: his dramatic reconstruction seems to imply at another point, for instance, that Rankine's suicide 'soon afterwards' was a direct result of internal conflict after having ceased to fund a pacifist *Seven Arts*,

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<sup>141</sup> Letter to Waldo Frank, September 1917, Sherwood Anderson, *Letters*, p. 17.

<sup>142</sup> Randolph Bourne, 'The War and the Intellectuals', *The Seven Arts* 2.2 (June 1917), pp. 133-146, 'Below the Battle', *The Seven Arts* 2.3 (July 1917), pp. 270-277, and 'A War Diary', *The Seven Arts* 2.5 (September 1917), pp. 535-547. The magazine's last issue was in October 1917.

and this story has entered the annals of what has almost become *Seven Arts* mythology. The truth is that her disappearance occurred a full three and a half years later, on 1st April 1921, after which her body was found washed up in New York Bay in early May of that year.<sup>143</sup>

*The Seven Arts* survives as a small legend; its independence from financial considerations clearly had limits. But if, as many critics believe, a central tenet of modernism is its aesthetic autonomy, its art-for-arts'-sake principle, then the emphasis placed by *The Seven Arts* on the division between art and commerce would support the notion of an emergent modernism. It is subject to the general paradox that socialist or anti-establishment publications and activities are often only made possible through a continued injection of funds raised through capitalist and establishment activity. Its tenets appear noble but naive; it is part of a general body of dissent which was to contribute towards a vigorous 1920s American counterculture and, though *The Seven Arts* often rejected more extreme or unusual modernist experimentation, it was modern in intent.<sup>144</sup> Like other magazines of its age, it demonstrates an awareness that the art of America must express the modernity of American life, while at the same time it rejects many of the activities that go to make up that modernity. But what it does, perhaps more than any other magazine of its time is to engage with, or enter into commerce with, the past which it is rejecting, the future for which it hopes, and the present in which it is situated.

Commerce is conversation, and 'conversation, wonderful conversation' was an enormously central part of New York society at the time.<sup>145</sup> Clearly a magazine or periodical is a primary part of the general intellectual conversation of a period: it addresses current topics, answers critics, suggests new ideas, and reflects the intellectual atmosphere, besides being itself a site of published controversy. To write

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<sup>143</sup> 'Mrs Rankine left legacies to Charity', *New York Times* (13 May 1921). Though the *New York Times* sometimes names Mrs Rankine as Annette K. Rankine (the name under which she wrote to Oppenheim) they also refer to her as Annette Norton Rankine, assuming her mother's name as her middle name, and sometimes as Annette W. B. Rankine, after her husband, William Birch Rankine, owner of one of the first hydro-electric power plants.

<sup>144</sup> For a representative selection of the disaffected, see Harold Stearns' collection of thirty essays, broadly definable as American cultural criticism. Stearns, *Civilization in The United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922).

<sup>145</sup> Ezra Pound, 'In Explanation', in Margaret Anderson, ed., *The Little Review Anthology* (New York: Hermitage House, 1953), p. 225.



was also to broadcast; it is almost impossible to imagine, now, how singular was the voice of each different periodical at the time when there was not today's media multiplicity. They clamoured, they denounced each other, they commented, they helped to make new authors and artists or to break established ones. The next two chapters of this thesis detail a very particular conversation between two magazines; not only was there some antagonism expressed in the pages of one towards the other; they are fundamentally opposed, and the following is an attempt to extract their difference rather than (as is much more usually the case in art criticism) to run them together under the general heading of American 'avant-garde'. Published within the same fifty blocks of Manhattan, both magazines were also interested in artistic renewal, and heralded modernism in radically different ways.

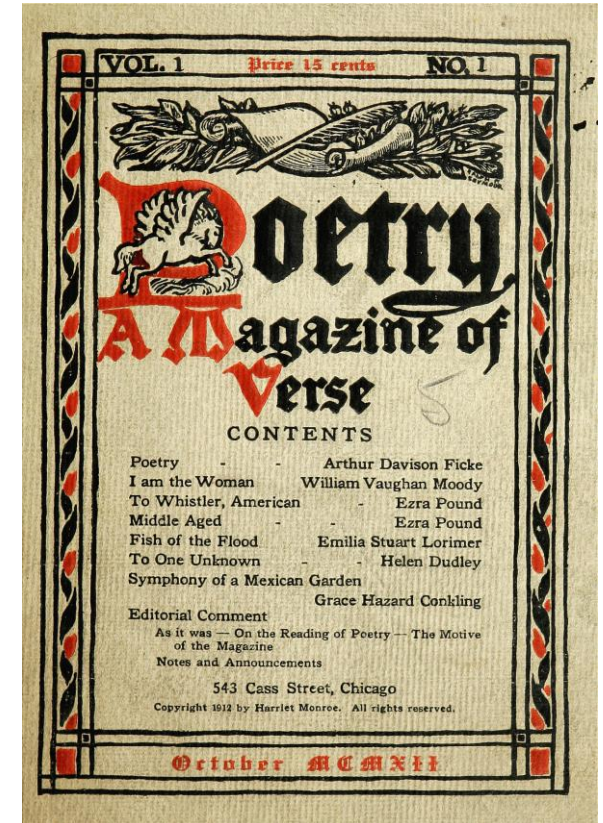
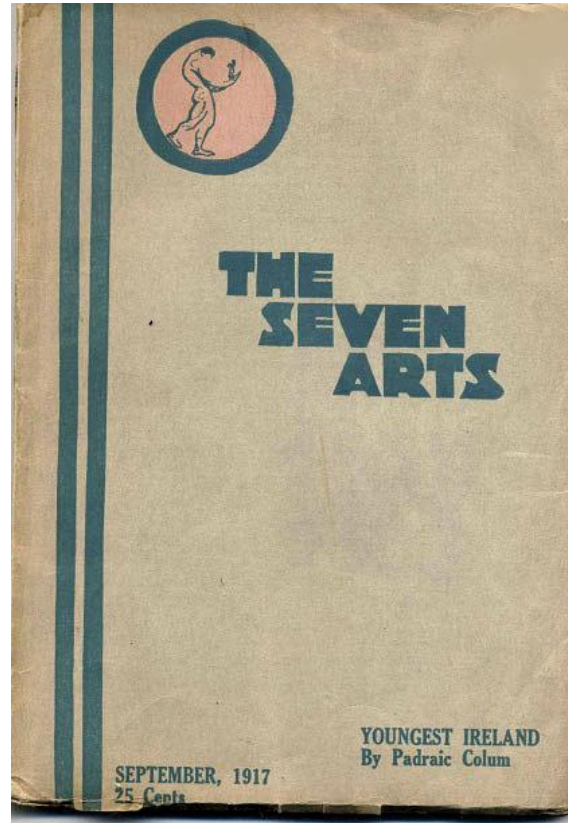
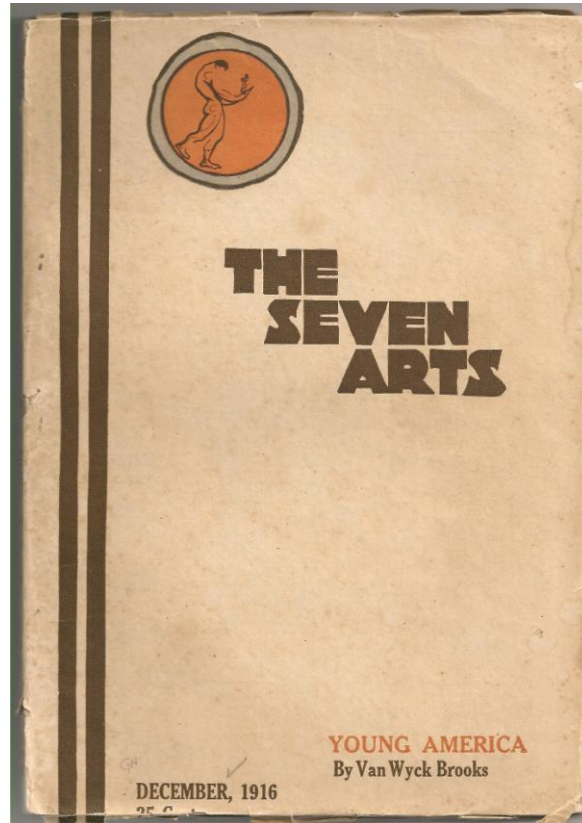


Figure 1

*The Seven Arts* cover design, December 1916 and September 1917, and *Poetry* cover, 1912

## Chapter 2 *291*: ‘A Commerce of Ideas with America’

### *Introduction*

This is the first of two chapters which detail a complex rivalry between two short-lived but significant magazines, *291* and *The Soil*. The discussion centres around two different uses of the term ‘commerce’: the first is a sense of the interconnecton and overlapping of different art forms, linked to a notion of how this idea relates to, and expands, the nature and definition of art. The second refers to perhaps the more commonly understood sense of the term, that of financial dealing. It has already been described here, in relation to *The Seven Arts*, how significant the idea of a separation between intellectual and financial commerce was to the thinkers of that time; the discussion in these two chapters hinges on the way that the separation operated, or purported to operate, in ‘the art world’ of the time. Michael North writes: ‘Recent scholarship on the marketing of modernism has tended to have rather a debunking tone, as the ostensibly high and mighty among the avant-garde are shown to have the same grubbily mercantile interests as the rest of us.’<sup>1</sup> My intention here, however, is not to debunk, but to examine seriously the difficulties of maintaining either the belief (manifest in *291*) that art and commerce can and must be dissociated, or the belief (manifest in *The Soil*) that commercial products can themselves be incorporated into the field of cultural production in a reversal of the Bourdieusian schema. Both senses of ‘commerce’ are addressed: while *291* primarily demonstrates interdisciplinarity and *The Soil* praises diversity, both periodicals are exceptional examples of the expression of belief that art must encompass and express American modernity.

Critical analysis of both these magazines has usually taken place within the context of art history, where they have sometimes been discussed together as precursors of the brief phenomenon known as ‘New York Dada’.<sup>2</sup> *291* ran twelve issues between March 1915 and February 1916, reissuing the whole set as a ‘portfolio edition’ in October 1916; *The Soil* ran just five issues between December 1916 and July 1917.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael North, ‘Art Value and Market Value Both Guaranteed’, unpublished paper, Flair Symposium: The State and Fate of Modernism, Harry Ransom Humanities Center, University of Texas, 20 February 2004, p. 1. I am grateful to Professor North for sharing this paper with me.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Dickran Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives: Dada and the American Avant-Garde 1910-1925* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press) and Francis Naumann, *New York Dada, 1915-1923* (New York: Abrams, 1994).

Though, *291*, like *The Soil*, satirised ‘isms’, it has been identified as a significant instrument of the introduction, to America, of European art and art theories such as Simultanism, Orphism, Cubism, and Futurism.<sup>3</sup> *The Soil* has been eulogised as an early paean to a uniquely American emergent mass culture, and as a tribute to, and a development from, the artistic ‘democracy’ of Walt Whitman. It has also been positioned, along with *The Seven Arts* (as we saw in the last chapter) as closely annexed to the movement sometimes known as ‘cultural nationalism’, a movement which hoped through artistic regeneration to unite and celebrate the disparate sprawling polyglot entity which ‘America’ had recently become.<sup>4</sup> This chapter and the next, while detailing how commerce affects the shape and content of these magazines, also seek to typify them, and also to comment on the editorial message of each publication and its position in relation to the modernist requirement to ‘make it new’. While they are both clearly in pursuit of a novel kind of art, of a new expression of rapidly-changing metropolitan conditions, they are set down here and dialogically contrasted, as two aspects of Raymond Williams’ ‘restless and often directly competitive sequence of innovations and experiments’ quoted in my Introduction.<sup>5</sup> Both magazines express a buoyant artistic optimism and *The Soil*, particularly, directly celebrates a noisy immediate present. Both publications seek to extend the ‘traditional’ definition of Art to reflect the diversity of contemporary existence. But it is important to remember that some of the commerce between the two magazines is also oppositional; in spite of the several connecting strands of their cultural generation they represent not only an aesthetic rivalry but an economic one. A better understanding of this rivalry is to be gained through knowledge of the personnel and creative group involved, and each chapter begins with such a description. There

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<sup>3</sup> Names invented by Guillaume Apollinaire. Excellent discussions of *291* are to be found by the following: Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives* as above, then Willard Bohn, ‘The Abstract Vision of Marius De Zayas’, *The Art Bulletin* 62.3 (September 1980) Francis Naumann, ‘Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and his New York Galleries’, *Artforum International* 39 (May 2001), pp. 173-174, Ruth L. Bohan, *Looking into Walt Whitman: American Art 1850-1920* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), William Rozaitis, ‘The Joke at The Heart of Things: Francis Picabia’s Machine Drawings and the Little Magazine *291*’, *American Art* 8.3/4 (1994), pp. 42-59, William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977) and others, cited below in context.

<sup>4</sup> ‘During the century after Waterloo, nearly 30 million people migrated to the United States, which increased in total population from under 9 million to 100 million. Immigration in the early years of the twentieth century was at a rate of almost a million a year.’ Gilman M. Ostrander, *American Civilization in the First Machine Age: 1890-1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) Chapter 7, ‘Americanization and Counter-Americanization’, p. 277.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 43.

follows subsequently a description of the magazine and its marked interdisciplinary character, with examination of some examples, and an analysis of the way *291* stands as it was intended by its founder Marius De Zayas, as a ‘commerce of ideas’, but also the way that the aesthetics of its producers tended to promote long-term symbolic capital (eventually turning to economic capital) and the way that the magazine itself supported this view. Also, below, is an examination of the way in which *291* addressed the machine, both in the form of the camera and in the incorporation of commercial products into unique ‘portraits’.

### *291: Background and Contributors*

*291* was produced by Marius De Zayas, an established associate of Alfred Stieglitz, who had already made extensive contributions to Stieglitz’s ground-breaking magazine of photography, art, and art theory, *Camera Work*. He had also acted as Stieglitz’s Paris agent, and they conducted an extensive correspondence between 1911 and 1916, when the end of *291* constituted almost the end of their once-close association.<sup>6</sup> De Zayas, a South American whose upper-class, intellectual family had been forced out of Mexico through political turbulence, arrived in New York from Mexico in 1907. Soon afterwards he obtained a regular job as a caricaturist and cartoonist for *The New York Evening World*, where his originality ensured that he ‘became a celebrity almost immediately’.<sup>7</sup> Stieglitz helped to finance *291*, but it was also made possible through funds provided by the formidable Agnes Ernst Meyer, wife of wealthy banker Eugene Meyer.<sup>8</sup> Having herself become the first female reporter on *The New York Sun*, Meyer contributed editorials and art work to the magazine and importantly, helped with its financial support.<sup>9</sup> She and her husband also financed De Zayas’ Modern Gallery. Another contributor, the French photographer Paul Haviland, who lived in New York, also underwrote the rent for

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<sup>6</sup> Letters between Alfred Stieglitz and Marius De Zayas in *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came To New York*, ed. Francis Naumann (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Bohn, ‘The Abstract Vision of Marius De Zayas’, p. 434.

<sup>8</sup> Details of the life and philanthropy of Agnes Ernst Meyer in the Eleanor Roosevelt papers archive at the George Washington University, on line at <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/mep/displaydoc.cfm?docid=erpn-agnmey> (accessed 22 April 2009).

Eugene Meyer was eventually to buy a newspaper, *The Washington Post*.

<sup>9</sup> Sue Davidson Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography* (London: Quartet, 1983), p. 162.

“291”, the gallery premises and artistic ‘retreat’ which also served as the magazine production office. De Zayas solicited contributions from the artist Francis Picabia, whom he had met in Paris among a circle of associates centred round the poet, essayist, and critic Guillaume Apollinaire. This group included the artist Giorgio De Chirico, painter and musician Alberto Savinio (De Chirico’s brother), and Pablo Picasso. De Zayas, Savinio and Picabia had also recently collaborated on the production of a proto-surrealist pantomime with words by Apollinaire. Articles in *291* appear in French and English, sometimes both. Other contributors include the artist and poet Katharine Rhoades, Stieglitz himself, and the American photographer and occasional columnist in *Camera Work*, J. B. Kerfoot. Little is now known about Rhoades, though she had an extended, intimate, correspondence with Stieglitz over about twenty-five years.<sup>10</sup>

Along with Paul Haviland, De Zayas had published the treatise *A Study of The Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression* in 1913, which expounded a theory that artistic production was an expression of the unconscious mind:

We firmly believe that the modern evolution of plastic expression has added a great deal to the development of human thought, for it has brought to reason and conscience many unconscious feelings of man...

We could say that the latest movement in expression is the metaphysical expression of a psychological theory<sup>11</sup>

This idea of art as an expression of the human unconscious clearly anticipates those of the prime exponents of the psychological, the surrealists, by a number of years, but is evident in some of the experimental work in *291*. At the same time, De Zayas continued with regular paid work as an illustrator, in a distinctive but accessible style. This can be seen to full effect in his drawings for *Vaudeville* (1913), Caroline Caffin’s critical study of American Vaudeville Theatre and its artists. This work is relevant here for two reasons: first the book, a serious examination of popular culture, predated *The Soil*, which specifically celebrated and critically evaluated various popular performances. It also predated by some years Marsden Hartley’s *Adventures in the*

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<sup>10</sup> Correspondence, Katharine Rhoades and Alfred Stieglitz, a volume of letters between 1911 and 1939, in Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O’Keeffe Archive.

<sup>11</sup> Marius De Zayas and Paul Haviland, *A Study of The Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression* (New York: “291”, 1913), pp. 33-34.

*Arts* (1921) and the more well-known *7 Lively Arts* (1924) by Gilbert Seldes.<sup>12</sup> The second reason is that while De Zayas had produced some extremely original experimental work for *Camera Work* and for *291*, his own ethics did not preclude the remunerated production of vivid, stylized, but broadly conventional illustrations. Though Stieglitz and De Zayas were ultimately to progress in very different artistic directions, the influence and approval of Stieglitz, and indeed his provision of a publishing facility, were thus crucial to the instigation of *291*.

Alfred Stieglitz was at that time already internationally celebrated as a photographer. He regularly and insistently promoted photography as a distinct art form, and from about 1907 advocated the idea of the stark, unretouched photograph over the pictorial technique (which he had himself helped to develop) as a way of conveying artistic Truth. He also repeatedly voiced the then radical opinion that the technological basis of photography was an essential part of its appeal as art, and that this should be exploited rather than disguised. His view represented a departure; the skill of retouching and developing a photograph to look like a painting was, even by 1915, still sometimes regarded as the only 'artistic' skill involved in photography.<sup>13</sup> 'Art photography' Francis Frith had written in 1859, 'will embrace all pictures where the artist ... determines to infuse his mind into them by arranging, modifying, or otherwise disposing them, so that they may appear in a more appropriate or beautiful manner.'<sup>14</sup> The understanding of 'the beautiful' is overtly questioned in *Camera Work* and, as we will see below, in *291*. 'Artistic' photography was described by Stieglitz as late as 1899 as adding to a photograph 'the feeling and inspiration of the artist, to which is added afterward the purely technical knowledge,' thus subordinating technical skill to the subjective 'aesthetic' intuition of the photographer.<sup>15</sup> In this article, in *Scribner's*, he describes the appropriate technical re-touching processes. Soon afterwards however he repudiated these ideas, asserting and re-asserting that

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<sup>12</sup> Marsden Hartley, *Adventures in the Arts: Informal Chapters on Painters, Vaudeville and Poets* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921); Gilbert Seldes, *The 7 Lively Arts* [1924] (New York: Dover Publications, 2001) introd. by Michael Kammen.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance the 1916 plea for abstract photographic art by Alvin Langdon Coburn, 'The Future of Pictorial Photography' in *Photography: Essays and Images* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 205, which originally appeared in *Photograms of the Year*, 1916.

<sup>14</sup> Frances Frith, 'The Art of Photography' in *Photography: Essays and Images* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, 'Pictorial Photography' (1899, reproduced from *Scribner's*), in *Photography: Essays and Images* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 115.

images should be critically appreciated entirely for their photographic quality. 'Never' wrote Paul Rosenfeld of Stieglitz retrospectively in 1924, 'has photography been practised so nude of tricks of any sort'.<sup>16</sup> With a group of dedicated practitioners, Stieglitz instigated the 'Photo-Secession' group in New York in 1903, and between 1903 and 1917 edited the unique and elegant *Camera Work* magazine as an organ of this group.<sup>17</sup> In 1905 he acquired gallery space for 'The Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession' at 291 Fifth Avenue. This became known as "291", the site for Stieglitz's pioneering interest in, and promotion of, modern painting to an American 'art world' public which was still sceptical, and a name which continued even after it moved across the corridor to number 293, and thus named the magazine.<sup>18</sup>

The 1913 Armory Show brought the work of sculptors Constantin Brancusi and Alexander Archipenko and painter Georges Braque to this public, along with the sensations of the show, Marcel Duchamp's 'Nude Descending a Staircase' and Matisse's 'Luxury'.<sup>19</sup> It is worth mentioning here that the Futurists excluded themselves from this exhibition because the organisers would not agree to exhibiting them all together, with an explicit notice.<sup>20</sup> 291's stated allegiance was to Guillaume Apollinaire, who had vociferously opposed Futurist ideas: 'They want to paint "states of mind". That is the most dangerous kind of painting imaginable. It will inevitably lead the Futurist painters to become mere illustrators' he wrote in *Le Petit Bleu* (Paris) in 1912.<sup>21</sup> Agnes Meyer's editorial nevertheless promoted the modernity of the idea of the representation of 'states of mind', as did the title of her own collaborative work 'Mental Reactions' (see below), and as did Stieglitz's own assertion that 'the latest movement in expression is the metaphysical expression of a psychological theory'. But many of the extraordinarily interactive ideas expressed in the text of 291, those of simultaneity, multi-dimensional painting, the inter-relation of disciplines such as art and music, art and poetry, are recognizably related to the art movement which became

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<sup>16</sup> Rosenfeld, 'Alfred Stieglitz' in *Port Of New York* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1924) p. 249.

<sup>17</sup> See Hartmann, 'A Plea for Straight Photography', *Camera Work* 6 (April, 1904), p. 25, for a clear expression of the principles of the group; for biographical details of Stieglitz and his involvement with 291 see Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde*.

<sup>18</sup> Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde*, p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> See figure 6a, p. 117, front cover of exhibition catalogue, which lists the artists.

<sup>20</sup> See Didier Ottinger, 'Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism', *Futurism* (Tate Publishing, 2009), exhibition catalogue, p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> Apollinaire, 'Les Futuristes', *Le Petit Bleu* (9 February 1912), quoted in Ottinger, ed., *Futurism*, p. 29.



known for a time as ‘Cubofuturism’, named by Apollinaire perhaps as an attempt to unite the warring factions and to consolidate the modern art movement.<sup>22</sup> *291* is clearly one of the more lucid expositions, to the United States, of what was at the time a misunderstood and underestimated phenomenon.

Though *291* was at the time a unique expression, in America, of new theories about art, other specialist books and articles had reached those who were interested in exploring its significance. Some have already been mentioned: parts of Stanton MacDonald Wright’s *Treatise on Color* were written in 1913, as was De Zayas’ and Haviland’s *Study of The Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression*. Both are interesting texts but slightly impenetrable. A short text attempting to explain Modern Art to puzzled Americans was J. Nilsen Laurvik’s *But Is It Art?* also published in that year and on sale at the Armory Show; Laurvik’s understanding of the different movements however seems, retrospectively, very general: a picture of Marcel Duchamp and his brothers (sculptor Raymond Duchamp-Villon and painter Jacques Villon) is entitled ‘The Futurist Brothers.’<sup>23</sup> An exhibition devoted solely to Futurism as a distinct movement, with a manifesto specific to its painting was held, not in New York but San Francisco, in 1915.<sup>24</sup> Lisa Panzera has noted a tendency in American art criticism to de-politicise the Futurist movement and narrow its time-scale to the five-year period prior to American entry into the First World War, thus avoiding its subsequent undeniable association with Fascism. She also points out the general misunderstanding of *Nude Descending a Staircase* as ‘Futurist’. *291*’s niche then was the propagation of important ideas and ideals underlying the production of modern art, some of which have later been subsumed under the heading of ‘Futurist’. Panzera’s comment that ‘Futurist concepts of simultaneity, synaesthesia, and the fourth dimension, as well as by their contribution to the other arts, such as music and literature’, as will become clear, is an appropriate description of the heteroglossic *291*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See *Futurism*, pp. 15-83, for a detailed history of the fierce European controversy over the terms ‘Futurism’, ‘Cubism’, ‘Orphism’, and ‘Simultanism’.

<sup>23</sup> J. Nilsen Laurvik, *Is It Art? Post-Impressionism, Futurism, Cubism* (New York: International Press, 1913), p. 38; Ottinger, *Futurism*, draws attention to this.

<sup>24</sup> Lisa Panzera, ‘Italian Futurism and Avant-Garde Painting in the United States’, *International Futurism in Arts and Literature*, ed. Günter Berghaus (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), p. 223.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

While Stieglitz was not directly involved in the production of the Armory Show, his previous exhibitions have been acknowledged as an influence on its contents and subsequent reception, though other critics have inferred that he himself exaggerated his part in it later when he discovered exactly how influential it had proved to be.<sup>26</sup> In addition to showing a series of groundbreaking exhibitions, including the work of European-influenced American painters John Marin and Marsden Hartley, “291” also became regarded by its supporters as a kind of sanctum with the atmosphere of a religious retreat.<sup>27</sup> Stieglitz was also well-known for being resolutely ‘anti-commercial’ in terms of art and art sales. During the course of this chapter this idea will be further explored; it is instrumental to an understanding of *291*, particularly in its relation to *The Soil*.

### *Form and Function: Simultaneous Representations*

That the idea of simultanism is essentially naturalistic is obvious; that the polyphony of interwoven sounds and meanings has a decided effect upon our senses is unquestionable, and that we can get at the spirit of things through this system is demonstrable.<sup>28</sup>

The above statement, from the first issue, characterises *291*, which presents its own ‘polyphonic’ commerce of interdisciplinarity and artistic fusion. *291* is something of a transatlantic transplant, despite its production wholly from one New York location. Being the product of a group of primarily visual artists and therefore its overall layout and format, which is where this discussion of *291*’s ‘commerce of ideas’ begins, were of supreme importance. ‘Haviland, De Zayas and I loved quality. We wanted good paper and ink, careful printing and mailing’ recalled Stieglitz later.<sup>29</sup> The magazine was a lavish production by any standards, even those of Stieglitz’s *Camera Work*, which employed hand-cut pages and full page photographic reproductions. Here by

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<sup>26</sup> For Stieglitz’s contributions to the Armory show see Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde*, pp. 135, 170-171. For the latter view see Roy Kotynek and John Cohassey, *American Cultural Rebels: Avant-Garde and Bohemian Artists, Writers and Musicians from the 1850s through the 1960s* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2008), pp. 60-61.

<sup>27</sup> For a worshipful description of the hallowed atmosphere, see Paul Rosenfeld (writing as Peter Minuit), “291 Fifth Avenue”, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 61.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Simultanism’, *291* No. 1 (March 1915), p. [2] (unnumbered pages).

<sup>29</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, quoted in Dorothy Norman’s introduction to the 1972 edition of *291* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), unnumbered pages.

way of introduction to *291* are Stieglitz's own words from *Camera Work*, which acted as an advertisement to attempt to sell more issues of the already-complete series, in the form of a combined 'portfolio':

"291" is always experimenting. During 1915-16, amongst other experiments, was a series with type-setting and printing. The experiments were based upon work which had been done with type and printers' ink, and paper, by Apollinaire in Paris, and by the Futurists in Italy. No work in this spirit had as yet been attempted in America. The outcome of those American experiments has been a portfolio, consisting of twelve numbers of a publication called "291.". The size of the sheets approximate 12 x 20 inches. Two editions were printed, one, the ordinary, on heavy white paper, of a thousand copies; the other, an edition of one hundred printed on very heavy Japan vellum. With the exception of the one picture in type by Apollinaire, all the matter and all the pictures in this publication have appeared nowhere [sic] else. One number is devoted to photography, and includes a Japan vellum proof of "The Steerage" by Alfred Stieglitz.<sup>30</sup>

It was as large as a newspaper, and the vellum on which it was printed was a favourite for limited issue, collectors' editions. In addition to black and white, multi-format pages like the one illustrated (see figure 2, p. 112), *291* contains hand-blocked colour prints and full-page illustrations. No edition ran to more than eight pages and there was no standard arrangement of material, so the cover of the second number, for example, is headed with the title '291' but looks like an inner page, with a four-column format. The column formats differ from page to page and issue to issue, and are for interest and variety rather than as a space-saving device; an article by Paul Haviland in the form of a dialogue, for instance, was printed in a single column with two-inch margins in a 16-point typeface.<sup>31</sup> Its contents are as unpredictable and varied as its form.<sup>32</sup> The cost of producing each issue was about a hundred dollars, and in no way covered by the retail price, which began at ten cents an issue. But in Stieglitz's paragraph, the prominence of the physical description of the magazine and the foregrounding of its size and weight, indicate a regard for material quality as an indicator of the magazine's inherent value. Stieglitz's aim, whether or not explicitly acknowledged by him, appears to have been that the edition accrue symbolic capital and, as Bourdieu suggests, economic capital would inevitably follow.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, '291 – A New Publication', *Camera Work* 48 (October 1916), p.62.

<sup>31</sup> Paul B. Haviland, 'Interview with the Professor', *291* No. 1 (March 1915), p. [4] (unnumbered pages).

<sup>32</sup> All issues of the magazine except No. 4 are reproduced at <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/291/index.htm>, the 'Dada archive' of the University of Iowa. Although *291* is included in this archive it seems only tangentially connected with what is now called American Dada, and is more than anything an experiment in creative synthesis.

<sup>33</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Field of Cultural Production', *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), p. 75: "Symbolic capital" is to be understood as economic or political capital that is disavowed,

In a letter to Alfred Stieglitz, Marius De Zayas wrote ‘I am working hard in making these people understand the convenience of a commerce of ideas with America. And I want to observe the spirit of what they are doing to bring it to “291.”’<sup>34</sup> Though De Zayas was actually referring to propagating the ideas of his Paris colleagues, part of the purpose of *291* was indeed to propound and spread views on art, some already prevalent in Europe, which reflected a changing age. De Zayas repeats the phrase in the first issue of his magazine where, he states, the effort of “291” the gallery has been ‘to further the progress of both the artist and the community through a commerce of ideas.’<sup>35</sup> In an opening editorial for *291*, entitled ‘How Versus Why’, Agnes Ernst Meyer puts forward the view that art, in the twentieth century, is undergoing a scholastic resurgence similar to that of the middle ages:

let us hope that experiment in art as in science will tend to throw all systems overboard leaving the artist free once more to find his own truth with an untrammelled mind ... Literary painting, musical color and form interpretations, mathematical and fourth dimensional somersaults may all be relegated to the scrap heap but from it would arise a new art that would be NOT THE PRODUCT OF FOREIGN LAWS BUT A LAW UNTO ITSELF<sup>36</sup>

While the magazine is often considered to be ‘proto-dada’ it is clear that, far from being, like Dada, anti-art, Meyer saw as crucial the fact that art should stand for its own sake, ‘a law unto itself’, as a ‘truth’ inspired, but uncontaminated, by its environment, and judged accordingly by ‘scientific’ standards.<sup>37</sup> This is a far cry from the random shock tactics, for instance, of Wyndham Lewis’s *Blast*. As Meyer announces in this introduction (the closest thing to a ‘manifesto’ that is included in the magazine) the aim is not simply to blow existing ideas of art apart but to synthesise and select them and build something new and solid. The politically or socially adversarial elements prominent in *Blast* and in one or two later movements represented by American magazines (*The Blind Man*, *American Da-Da*) are not

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misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a ‘credit’ which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees “economic” profits.’

<sup>34</sup> Letter, De Zayas to Stieglitz, 9 July 1914, in De Zayas, *How When and Why Modern Art Came To New York*, ed. Francis Naumann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p.184.

<sup>35</sup> De Zayas, Marius, ‘Unilaterals’, *291* No. 1 (March 1915), p [2].

<sup>36</sup> De Meyer, Agnes, ‘How Versus Why’, *291* No. 1 (March 1915), p.[3].

<sup>37</sup> The idea of a science of criticism is possibly influenced by a reading of the French philosopher, Hippolyte Taine.

present in *291*. But the transatlantic ‘commerce of ideas’ is faithfully, and often controversially, represented.

The same issue begins with a set of short paragraphs on various ‘isms’, one of which, headed ‘simultanism’ (quoted above) and juxtaposed to a cubist drawing by Picasso, continues:

The idea of simultanism is expressed in painting by the simultaneous representation of the different figures of a form seen from different points of view, as Picasso and Braque did some time ago; or by the simultaneous representation of the figures of several forms as the futurists are doing.<sup>38</sup>

‘Simultanism’ had also been the name given two years previously, by Apollinaire, to the technique of Sonia Delaunay in work such as her ‘Trans-Siberian Express’, a work which combines text and painting so that the formal qualities of each are interdependent. Much of *291* furthers a similar approach.<sup>39</sup> The magazine prints, for example, Apollinaire’s *caligramme* ‘Voyage’, a word sculpture whose physical form signifies and echoes its verbal content. While direct reference to the technique by name was new to America, Stephen Kern has traced the conscious pursuit of simultanism in art and painting as developed over the turn of the twentieth century, influenced by the development of film and from the musical models of Strauss, Debussy, and Bela Bartók; as a literary example from America he also cites Frank Norris’s *Octopus* (1901), with its depiction of the ‘stranglehold of iron tentacles on farmers.’<sup>40</sup> This is a metaphorical correspondence: a different kind of interaction or commerce or inter-relation between art forms was promoted by *291*. J. B. Kerfoot’s ‘Bunch of Keys’ (See Figure 2, page 112) adopts the same technique as Apollinaire’s poem but which seems less than wholly serious. It is also, incidentally, one of a number of works in *291* by artists more usually known for work in other media: Stieglitz contributed a short, uncharacteristic, fictional piece in the form of a psychological reverie, Edward Steichen, the photographer, a drawing. Kerfoot, as we

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<sup>38</sup> De Zayas, ‘Simultanism’, *291* No. 1 (March 1915), p.[2].

<sup>39</sup> For an illuminating discussion of Delaunay’s work and simultan(e)ism, see Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and The Language of Rupture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 65-89.

have seen, was mainly known for his photography.<sup>41</sup> The experiment of *291* therefore extended to commerce between artists and arts as well as between art forms.

One of the most successful examples of the combinatorial approach can be seen here, in Meyer's own work following her introduction to the first number of *291* (Figure 3, p. 113). Entitled 'Mental Reactions', it combines an interior monologue with the type set out on the page interspersed with graphics by Marius De Zayas. The fragmentary and rather disjointed, nevertheless coherent, phrases reflect their meaning in both contextual and concrete form. The first few phrases are reproduced here:

Twilight.

Relief. Many minds, many voices would have been unendurable today.

What a restful voice his.

Silence of snow-covered roof-tops. New York is best from the back and from above.

He is telling me this ——— laughing clowns ———  
to find out whether I have dared to live ———

Windows

——— one  
——— two  
——— three ———

How can he bear to speak as if it was real to him?<sup>42</sup>

The dashes here represent lines which are actually part of De Zayas' drawing, and they are arranged within the picture as part of a perspective. In an intricately integrated combination, these lines become printed dashes within the text as well as parts of the drawing. The nature of the phraseology and the physical layout of the text mirror the woman's immediate thought patterns, in fact a 'stream-of-consciousness' with marked focal movements from the interpersonal ('He is telling me this ... to find out whether I have dared to live') to the introspective ('How can he bear to speak as if it was real to him?') and from the intrapersonal ('Relief. Many minds, many voices would have been unendurable') to the precisely geographical ('Silence of snow-covered roof-tops. New York is best from the back and from above'). The effect of the text is attenuated by its position within the graphic layout. The words 'Silence'

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<sup>41</sup> Kerfoot, 'A Bunch of Keys', *291* No. 3 (May 1915): illustration Figure 2.

<sup>42</sup> Agnes E. Meyer and Marius De Zayas, 'Mental Reactions', *291* No. 2 (April 1915), [3] (unnumbered pages). The lines in this quotation represent parts of the drawing.

and ‘Twilight’ placed separately and distinctly, serve as additional atmospheric referents. Certain items are, whimsically, physically represented by their textual description, such as the ‘Parfumerie de Nice’ phrase, elegantly represented in the shape of a perfume bottle spray, and ‘Crème S’ in which the soft curling font imitates



the consistency of face cream – the presence of these objects suggests that the woman is sitting perhaps at a dressing table, at a mirror, and indeed the drawing mirrors the textual situation, but in addition it also appears as a head looking down and to the right, thus physically containing a ‘consciousness’. The interpolation of ‘Shouldn’t it be a circumflex?’ is meta-textual, rather than referencing the interior subject. It is the stray ‘mental reaction’ of an English-speaking person idly wondering, in the middle of relating a direct encounter, about the correctness of her written French language. The word ‘myself’ appears in letters which are tall, thin, and transparent, all of which characteristics perhaps echo the physical characteristics of Meyer herself, tall, thin, and pale.<sup>43</sup> Other examples include tilted and variously aligned text representing its content (‘tilted hat’ and ‘dancing buttons’). The multivalency of the text presents conflict – a conflict which is described and at last, however, dismissed by the author in the light of the fact that as it will soon be her children’s bed time, she must hurry for a ‘last romp’, which she considers is ultimately more important than the poem’s subject – herself.

In the *Camera Work* paragraph cited earlier, Stieglitz continued with a description of the ‘new typography’ of the magazine which, according to him,

has already a name: “Psychotype”, an art which consists in making the typographical characters participate in the expression of the thoughts and in the painting of the states of the soul, no more as conventional symbols but as signs having significance in themselves.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> As pictured in Edward Steichen’s 1910 photograph, ‘The Girl from the Sun’.

<sup>44</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, *Camera Work* 48 (October 1916), p. 62.

The significance of *291*'s typography as described here by Stieglitz clearly relates the physical page to the aesthetic expression of the spiritual, and is fully exemplified in 'Mental Reactions.' Stieglitz's particular use of the term 'psychotype' is unique, if not to him, then at least to the era in which he wrote.<sup>45</sup> The term is now in use in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and genetic biology, and represents one or other typology, the classification of psychological types rather than typography, the classification of printed type. Stieglitz proposes here however that typography *represents* typology, or a 'state of the soul', and his use of the word 'psychotype' recalls the then considerable American interest in Freudian psychology.<sup>46</sup> Richard Bradford has, in fact, put forward an assured thesis that the visual has always played a part in poetry whether or not the poem is specifically intended to be physically representational. In *Look of It* he cites sixteenth-century pattern poems as precursors of the great variety of twentieth-century visual poetry and 'poetry concrète' which, following Apollinaire's early example, became an important form of poetry in America, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the twelve issues of *291*, only one poem, by Katharine Rhoades, appears without line illustration; its layout however is a unique arrangement of textual spacing which recalls other, and later, modernist experiments (E. E. Cummings, for instance) in that its spatial form echoes its semantic content.<sup>48</sup> Thus almost all of the work published in *291* represents a 'commerce of ideas': not only an interchange of European and American ideas but a strong internal interchange, a dialogic, of textual and graphic expression, plus, if we are to accept Bradford's view, an incorporation of, or commerce with, past techniques into the creation of entirely new forms.

This kind of multiplicity, interdisciplinarity, and diversity of reference are key themes throughout *291*'s text. Issue number one prints the following:

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<sup>45</sup> He was introduced to the word by De Zayas, who himself is thought to have heard it from the French cubists.

<sup>46</sup> See Ann Douglas, *A Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1995), pp. 122-125 for the influence of Freud's 1909 visit to America on Americans at that time. She reports that by 1918, over 60 per cent of Freud's patients were American.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Bradford, *The Look of It: A Theory of Visual Form in English Poetry* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993).

<sup>48</sup> Katharine Rhoades, 'Flip-Flap', *291* No. 4 (June 1915), p [3].



That the idea of simultanism is essentially naturalistic is obvious; that the polyphony of interwoven sounds and meanings has a decided effect upon our senses is unquestionable, and that we can get at the spirit of things through this system is demonstrable.<sup>49</sup>

Fragments of simultaneous conversation purporting to be overheard in an art gallery are presented as an example:

At the Arden Gallery, 599 Fifth Avenue

"OH, COME ON, LET'S GO TO MAILLARDS."  
"I SAT NEXT REV. --- AT GLADYS' LUNCHEON."  
"NOBODY COULD LOOK HUMAN IN THOSE FULL SKIRTS."  
"DO YOU THINK HER HUSBAND KNOWS IT?"  
"SHE SAYS SHE'S A NEUTRAL BUT ---"  
"WHY DON'T THEY SERVE TEA HERE?"  
(All these phrases must be uttered simultaneously.)

*N.B. The object of the Arden Gallery, opened recently, is to encourage the Arts and Crafts in New York. Paintings, sculptures, furniture, tapestries and textiles from the seventh to the seventeenth century are on exhibition.*

The odd bathos produced by the reproduction of this conversation as 'the spirit of things' may or may not have been intentional. The inbuilt advertisement for the Arden Gallery also seems incongruous here, though it is known that De Zayas and Meyer negotiated for an exhibition of French modernism there in 1919.<sup>50</sup> It is possible that Apollinaire's simultanism was understood by De Zayas as 'amusing' irony, as he indicated in a letter to Stieglitz:

The last word in art in Paris is the "simultanism" in literature. Apollinaire is the father of it. I recommend you to read in the last number of the *Soirées* his Carte-Ocean. It is really very amusing. This Apollinaire is really the deepest observer of superficiality.<sup>51</sup>

De Zayas repeats the idea in the body of the text of 291: 'Apollinaire that profound observer of superficiality'.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless the 'isms' and experiments in 291 create intentional novelty through the combination and incorporation of different categories of discourse, the 'polyphony'

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<sup>49</sup> De Zayas, 'Simultanism', 291 No. 1 (March 1915), p. [2].

<sup>50</sup> Judith Zilczer, 'John Quinn and Modern Art Collectors in America, 1913-1924', *American Art Journal* 14.1 (Winter 1982), pp. 56-71.

<sup>51</sup> Letter, De Zayas to Stieglitz, 30 June 1914, *How, When, and Why and Why Modern Art Came To New York*, p. 181.

<sup>52</sup> De Zayas, 'Watch Their Steps', 291 No. 3 (May 1915), back page.

which gives the magazine its unmistakeable character. 291 number 1 attempts a written representation of this, and features a page of ambiguous paragraphs headed ‘simultanism’, ‘sincerism’, ‘satirism and satyrism’ and ‘idiotism’. Some of these are possibly designed to lampoon, but it is clear that the ‘isms’ in the first issue function as illustrations of Meyer’s critical theory of artistic experiment. ‘Sincerism’ is introduced as follows: ‘Just before the war a new tendency in art was initiated in Paris by the Italian musician Albert Savinio. He called it “Sincerism”.’<sup>53</sup> Issue 2 adds some further detail about Savinio’s music, which is ‘not harmonious or even harmonized, but DISHARMONIOUS. Its structure is based on drawing.’<sup>54</sup> Design characteristics are thus assigned to the enhancement of musical notation, extending 291’s emphasis on the combination of creative techniques. The page of music, reproduced in 291 issue number 3, is indeed visually very striking. It is part of a little-known piano suite from ‘Chants de la Mi-Mort’, originally intended as the libretto for a stage performance.<sup>55</sup> Willard Bohn has pointed out the close relationship between the brothers De Chirico, their ‘special language’, and between their art and music and the poetic works of Apollinaire. The music itself had, in fact, appeared previously in Apollinaire’s own *Soirées De Paris*. It is notable that while music is here championed as ‘drawing’, the words could be based on a drawing by Giorgio De Chirico, whose robotic, featureless, disturbing mannequins inspired Apollinaire when writing the libretto for the protagonist of the *Mi-Mort* ballet.<sup>56</sup> (Figure 4, p.114).

Thus the ‘commerce of ideas with America’ so important to De Zayas and Stieglitz is achieved not only by the ‘polyphony of sounds and meanings’ inherent in the text, but also by the multifarious European connections in other disciplines. The reproduction of Savinio’s music, though so little known now, seems to have been an early attempt at the introduction of atonal music to American audiences. Composers whose work was most noted for its atonality, Schoenberg, for example, had not then been heard in

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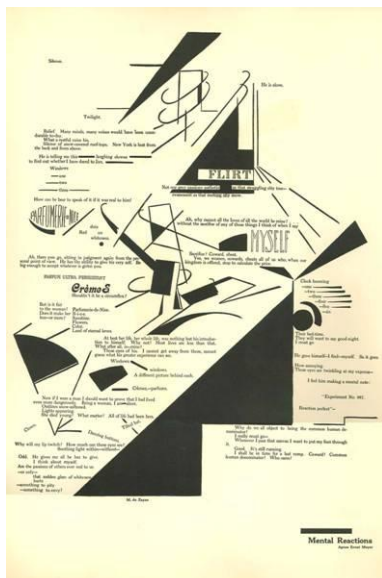
<sup>53</sup> De Zayas, ‘Sincerism’, 291 No. 1 (March 1915) p. [2].

<sup>54</sup> De Zayas, ‘New Music’, 291 No. 2 (April 1915), front cover.

<sup>55</sup> Alberto Savinio, *Chants de la mi-mort* [1914], perf. Bruno Canino, Luisa Castellani, Alberto Jona (Stradivarius: CD STR3309, 1992).

<sup>56</sup> Willard Bohn, ‘Apollinaire and De Chirico: The Making of the Mannequins’, *Comparative Literature*, 27.2 (Spring 1975), pp. 153-165. Also relevant to this thesis on the theme of commerce and art is the odd later career of De Chirico, who repudiated modernism and declined in critical estimation, thereafter remaking and ‘forging’ his own early style as a sort of protest against the disfavour of the art world. For the full story see Robert Hughes, ‘Giorgio De Chirico’ in *Nothing If Not Critical: Selected Essays on Art and Artists* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), pp. 160-164.

America. The extraordinary music of the American composer Charles Ives featured elements of atonality, but his music had been neither understood nor performed during his most creative years, held to be between 1900 and 1918.<sup>57</sup> In the multi-layered, sculptural form of ‘Mental Reactions’ it is also possible to discern both Cubist and Futurist influences from Europe. Compare Carlo Carrà’s *Woman on a Balcony* (1912), significantly subtitled ‘Simultaneity’:



The similarity of the subject, and the visual resemblance, are probably co-incidental, but they point to the cross-Atlantic influences, the trans-national commerce, which position *291* as an introduction, to New York art audiences, to important ideas involved in the production of avant-garde art.

### *Transatlantic influences, Commerce, and Consumer Technology*

An early text by Anton Bragaglia on the technique of photographs of moving images that he called ‘photodynamism’ reads:

We want to render what is not seen on the surface: we want to register the living sensation of a particular reality’s deep expression, and we are seeking its sensation of movement because

<sup>57</sup> ‘Charles Edward Ives’, Garry E. Clarke, *Essays on American Music* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), chapter 5.

that is rich with magnificent, hidden depths and multiple emotive sources that render it unspeakable and ungraspable.<sup>58</sup>

Bragaglia, an originating member of the Futurist movement, had therefore brought together as early as 1911 the idea that the simultaneous photographic image of movement represented the unknowable in a new dimension. '[I]n our hands time will become a fourth dimension in space' he writes, of the camera which is 'directed and dominated by us', emphasising human control, using the mechanical, over the resulting image. Thus, although Futurism is not explicitly promoted in *291*, and although Meyer's idea of the 'scientific influence in art' does not explicitly include machine technology, the mechanical is prominently represented throughout *291* in unusual and specific ways.

First, the magazine foregrounds the mechanical nature of the camera as a means of artistic expression. Issues 7-8 of *291* are devoted to the art of Alfred Stieglitz, and include a full-page reproduction of his iconic 1907 photograph 'The Steerage'. In the same issue Paul Haviland exalts technology as a human ideal:

WE ARE LIVING IN THE AGE OF THE MACHINE.  
MAN MADE THE MACHINE IN HIS OWN IMAGE. SHE HAS LIMBS  
WHICH ACT: LUNGS WHICH BREATHE; A HEART WHICH BEATS; A  
NERVOUS SYSTEM THROUGH WHICH RUNS ELECTRICITY. THE  
PHONOGRAPH IS THE IMAGE OF HIS VOICE; THE CAMERA THE  
IMAGE OF HIS EYE. THE MACHINE IS HIS "DAUGHTER BORN  
WITHOUT A MOTHER." THAT IS WHY HE LOVES HER. HE HAS  
MADE THE MACHINE SUPERIOR TO HIMSELF ... AFTER MAKING  
THE MACHINE IN HIS OWN IMAGE HE HAS MADE THE HUMAN  
IDEAL MACHINOMORPHIC ... WITHOUT HIM SHE REMAINS A  
WONDERFUL BEING, BUT WITHOUT AIM OR ANATOMY. THROUGH  
THEIR MATING THEY COMPLETE ONE ANOTHER. SHE BRINGS  
FORTH ACCORDING TO HIS CONCEPTIONS.<sup>59</sup>

This extraordinary upper-case paragraph, with its extended metaphors of incest, intercourse, conception, and birth and its strong recall of both the Pygmalion myth and divine creation, provides a theme through various other issues of *291*. There is a reproduction of a sketch by Picabia entitled *Fille Née Sans Mère* in issue 4 (different

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<sup>58</sup> Anton Bragaglia, 'Futurist Photodynamism', translated by Lawrence Rainey, and reproduced in *Modernism and Modernity* 15.2 (April 2008), p. 366.

<sup>59</sup> Paul B. Haviland, front cover, *291* Nos. 7-8 (September-October 1915).

from, but perhaps precursor to, the more well-known painting of the same name). The machine is reconstituted within the realm of Fine Art in what Haviland calls 'machinomorphic' form.<sup>60</sup>

Second, the idea of a living, innate, and inevitable association between man and machine is also represented by Picabia's work in issues 5-6: 'Picabia's machinist style was nourished by artistic precedents and its very existence depended on a mental climate so imbued with the triumphs of science and technology that the term "machine age" has been used to characterize the era' writes William Camfield.<sup>61</sup> These pictures represent a set of sometimes almost unmodified technical drawings, lifted from advertisements and engineering diagrams and reconstituted as caricatures of Stieglitz, Meyer, De Zayas, Haviland, and Picabia himself. Figure 5 is Picabia's full-page 'caricature' of Paul Haviland, with the advertisement from which it was adapted (Figure 5, p.115). Following the work of William Camfield, the American art critic William Rozaitis has published an extensive study of these drawings, which have become known not as 'machinomorphs' (Haviland's original term) but 'mechanomorphs'.<sup>62</sup> He points out the close relationship between Picabia and Stieglitz, and Picabia's complete break with the representative tradition. He parallels Picabia's search for the objective expression of emotions, which he calls 'a connection between objective form and a corresponding subjective mood', with Stieglitz's similar search for photographic objectivity. The drawing of Stieglitz he reads as particularly ironic; a camera which does not work. Rozaitis compares this to Picabia and De Zayas' perceived failure of Stieglitz's artistic mission, set out in the July-August issue of *291*: 'He wanted to discover America. Also, he wanted the Americans to discover themselves. But, in pursuing his object, he employed the shield of psychology and metaphysics. He has failed.'<sup>63</sup> Rozaitis convincingly shows how the irony, the interplay between visual and verbal symbols, the humour, and even the satire directed at the art world in Picabia's drawings form a narrative which comments both on the

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<sup>60</sup> Also see De Zayas and Haviland, *A Study of the Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression*, p.11: 'The religion of to-day is science, and the modern movement in art reflects this characteristic intellectual and analytical attitude of mind'; these works of Picabia have subsequently become known as 'mechanomorphs'.

<sup>61</sup> William A. Camfield, 'The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia', *Art Bulletin* 48.3-4, p. 310.

<sup>62</sup> William Rozaitis, 'The Joke at The Heart of Things: Francis Picabia's Machine Drawings and the Little Magazine *291*', *American Art* 8.3/4 (1994), pp. 42-59.

<sup>63</sup> De Zayas, [Untitled, on Alfred Stieglitz], *291* Nos. 5-6 (July-August 1915), p. [3].

nature of the “291” group and on the nature of America’s artistic culture, bound up as it was with the machine, and specifically with commercial, consumer technology. Importantly, he emphasises Picabia’s belief that ‘America’s artistic potential could be found in the machine’.<sup>64</sup> James Oppenheim might well have admired this view. As we saw in the first chapter here, he wrote in *The Seven Arts*: ‘The future for the artist then lies not in rejecting science, but in absorbing it’. *291* therefore presents us microcosmically with the conversation between American machinery and European art developments in modern art, a trans-cultural, trans-European commerce. The integration of machinery into art is crucial to *291*’s aesthetic, but it is on the whole a static, rather than a dynamic incorporation and unlike the Futurist ideal does not depict speed or movement.

### *Modernist Aesthetics and Commercial Ethics*

So far in this chapter the idea of ‘commerce’ has been used primarily in the sense of interchange, particularly interchange between different areas of art and also in the sense of the interchange of ideas between Europe and the United States. Importantly, it is consumer machinery, the instrument of America’s commercial success, which inspired Picabia’s drawings here. Neither Camfield nor Rozaitis explore the implications of this presentation of the commercial (in the shape of machinery) as incorporated into the classically aesthetic (in the shape of ‘portraiture’). Not only the mechanical construction of the camera, but also commercially-sold gadgets, such as the patent lamp and the spark plug, are referenced. As we saw in *The Seven Arts*, there was a considerable disinclination among artists and critics of the time to accept that there could be anything but antagonism between the financial and the artistic, and they further held that the practicalities of the former precluded the true production of the latter. The commercial is, and was then, however, so far imbricated with the artistic that it is difficult to imagine a situation where that ethic could reasonably be upheld. The machine, in America, was not simply a representation of the future, of progress. It was specifically a representation of the extraordinary material and economic growth of American supremacy, made possible by, first, the development and economically advantageous application of machinery in factory mass processing

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<sup>64</sup> Rozaitis, ‘The Joke at the Heart of Things’, p. 51.

and second, the enormous number of people who flocked to America to operate that machinery.

One could expand further on the arguments of Steinman and Rozaitis, and relate the contents and presentation of *291* particularly to the economic situation. Gilman Ostrander's excellent history, *American Civilization in the First Machine Age* documents this situation:

Automobile production had increased from 4,000 in 1900 to 573,000 in 1914 to almost 1.9 million in 1917. Two million Model T Fords had been manufactured during those latter years, and the day of the common man on wheels had come. Industrial power was 30 per cent electric in 1914 ... and electric lighting, which only the fairly rich could afford at the turn of the century, had widely replaced gas lights in the cities before the war. Telephones had increased from 1.3 million in 1900 to 10.5 million in 1915. ... The new era was at hand, but war in Europe was the major event of the day, demanding national concentration on Americanism and preparedness and then on mobilization for victory.

The new era belonged to engineers and business bureaucrats rather than to inventive mechanics and rugged individualists ... A like change was taking place in the business world with the rise of finance capitalism.<sup>65</sup>

To celebrate and incorporate the mechanical in art produced in America, therefore, was, whether intentionally or not, to acknowledge and approve the success of the American economic system which at the same time depended on the 'increasingly inhumane conditions' of the factory system.<sup>66</sup> 'In this way', comments Stephen Lewis, 'art functions in parallel with the industrial economy.'<sup>67</sup> Where many present-day analysts and critics assume as a standpoint for argument, the same pervasive art/commerce bifurcation which occupied the group in *The Seven Arts*, it is already clear from this thesis that there is a great deal of ambivalence and complexity in this position.

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<sup>65</sup> Ostrander, *American Civilization in the First Machine Age*, chapter 5, 'The Mechanization of American Society', p. 217.

<sup>66</sup> Ostrander, *American Civilization in the First Machine Age*, p. 204.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen E. Lewis, 'The Modern Gallery and American Commodity Culture', *Modernism/Modernity* 4.3 (1997), 69-91, p. 81. One could add here the example of American films. What was clearly recognised in Europe as an art form as early as 1911 was equally clearly recognised in 1914, by one of its leading advocates, as a potentially vast commercial achievement. Samuel Goldwyn was an entrepreneur, not an artist. '[W]hen I went into that theatre I had no idea of ever going into the film business. When I went out I was glowing with the sudden realization of my way to a fortune' he remarks in his autobiography, describing the first time he saw a film. (Goldwyn, Samuel, *Behind the Screen* (London: Grant Richards, 1924), p. 16.

In fact there are a number of comparatively complex references within the text of *291* to the commercial, and to the nature of both short term value and long term value. While the idea of ‘value’ as referenced by Stieglitz might not immediately amount to sales value it could serve as an example of the idea of accrued symbolic capital, as we have already seen.<sup>68</sup> It is clear, too, from Stieglitz’s article in *Camera Work*, that he considered *originality* and *innovation* to be crucial markers of symbolic value, to the extent that he exaggerates *291*’s originality.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, his ideas of ‘best quality’ materials are entirely compatible with conventional commercial judgements.

Other references to material value are apparent in the notices which appear in most of the editions of *291*, containing detailed, and different, itemised prices for the various issues. The progress of these seems almost capricious, particularly the item in issue 3; ‘as the issue becomes exhausted the price of single copies of the ‘de luxe’ edition of No. 2 will be increased as follows’ thus exploiting the standard economic principle that diminishing supply dictates a rise in price (See Figure 6, p. 116). The irony of this was not lost on Stieglitz. Dorothy Norman reports, in her introduction to the 1972 reprint of *291*:

When Stieglitz told me that about one hundred people subscribed to the regular edition and eight to the special, he asked: “Aside from that, how many copies do you think were bought? Make your estimate as low as your imagination will permit. None! Once the gallery “291” had come to an end in 1917, I didn’t know what to do with the nearly eight thousand copies of *291* that remained. I called in a rag picker. It was wartime. The cost of paper was high. Perhaps my gesture was a satirical one. The rag picker offered five dollars and eighty cents for the lot, including the wonderful Imperial Japan *Steerage* prints ... I kept the greater part of the de luxe edition but, in time, I destroyed most of that. I asked myself why people were not willing to pay two dollars for *The Steerage*, even though they constantly were at me to let them have copies! Associates wondered why I did not give the gravures away if I made them available at so low a price. But wasn’t I giving them away, in setting the price I did?”<sup>70</sup>

*291* is here documented as an exceptional waste of money, given that the approximate cost of producing each number was about one hundred dollars.<sup>71</sup> But Stieglitz’s

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<sup>68</sup> Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 29-73.

<sup>69</sup> Besides his own *Steerage* the page of music had previously been reproduced, and the contents of the magazine also owed a considerable cultural debt to *Les Soirées De Paris*. In its form and its large format, however, it was entirely an original product resulting from the grouping of those artists in the New York of the time.

<sup>70</sup> From Dorothy Norman, ‘Introducing 291’, the introduction to the 1972 AMS reprint edition of *291* (New York: AMS, 1972). Also see Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography*, p. 127.

<sup>71</sup> From Dorothy Norman’s introduction to the 1972 edition of *291*, unpaginated.



gesture, far from throwing art in the face of capitalism, actually achieved the opposite. It followed, again, an overriding principle of supply and demand – destroy, rather than allow prices, or putative prices, to reduce and destabilise the market. In the long term it was clear to Stieglitz that the value of his work and the work of the artists in *291* would be recognised, and that that recognition would eventually take the form of a rise in price. There are numerous stories of artists destroying their own work, but generally because they feel it to be inferior or unrepresentative. Stieglitz was destroying his own and other artists' work for quite the opposite reason: few people appreciated (that is, were willing to pay) for it, therefore to make it scarce was the way to achieve lasting value. Indeed though *The Steerage* was a small, and comparatively easily reproducible, part of *291*'s total output, and independently available from Stieglitz himself, it is interesting that he uses this as an example. The fact that in total, over twelve issues, only one hundred subscriptions were sold, might retrospectively make the price scale look ironic. It is extremely odd: the price for the magazine was very low and the price for twelve numbers doubled and the price of the 'special portfolio' edition quadrupled. Even so the portfolio edition would hardly meet the cost of production, and it remains to fathom the purpose of its inclusion. Since it appeared in every issue, however, it was clearly serious in intent. Therefore in spite of Stieglitz's stated disdain for the commercial, his approval of these self-advertisements for *291* indicate an appreciation of the operations of the market, and perhaps of the way the readership might view a price increase directly related to availability.

We have seen Stieglitz's 'love of quality' from the outset. The conversation between Stieglitz and Norman continued: 'This meant that the cost was greater than first figured. Regardless, we went ahead. The result was what counted.'<sup>72</sup> Stieglitz thus 'remembers' the cost as being immaterial. But the correspondence of Stieglitz and De Zayas at the time shows a more prosaic concern with cost and the conservation of money, on Stieglitz's side quite as much as on De Zayas':

I have disputed the last bill of Rogers as it was unreasonably high. The charges for half tone were ridiculous. It should be understood that the plates in this Number Twelve should not

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<sup>72</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, quoted in Norman's introduction – see p. 90 above.

cost more than eighteen cents a square inch. For this A-1 work can be done. As a matter of fact they can be done for a great deal less.<sup>73</sup>

The effect of Stieglitz's subsequent representation of the irrelevance of cost, coupled with his and De Zayas' specifications of monetary value increasing with diminishing supply, is therefore simply to move the condition of 'value' to a different register. Sue Davidson Lowe writes of "291" (the gallery):

Considering the fact that 291 was never formally advertised, except in *Camera Work*, the gallery drew an astonishingly large and international audience. Between 1905 and 1912 alone, Alfred recalled some twenty years later, 167,000 visitors found their way to 291's tiny rooms. As Alfred was shrewd enough to realize, advertising was superfluous when priceless free publicity accrued from the eagerness of newspapers and periodicals to report controversy<sup>74</sup>

Lowe's use of the word 'shrewd' here denotes Stieglitz's material or commercial cleverness; her own description of 'priceless free publicity' as opposed to the cost of advertising is equally telling. Was Stieglitz's 'passionate' disregard for price (which Lowe mentions elsewhere) tempered with a regard for longer-term pricelessness? There are very few original copies of *291* extant and its value has long since passed into a collectors' realm not perhaps of the 'priceless' but at least of the very highly priced.<sup>75</sup> Rainey describes the difference between an 'ordinary edition' of *Ulysses* and Sylvia Beach's de-luxe edition which, in Rainey's view, gave the book a commodity value for collectors and dealers that was distinct from any innate artistic value.<sup>76</sup> Rainey's argument concerning modernism's 'unstable synthesis of artistic invention and commercial constraints' is therefore extremely relevant in the context of *291*.<sup>77</sup>

*291* was not financed by advertising but the text of the various issues clearly addresses the financial or commercial value of art work, in addition to the 'commerce of ideas' which it describes as favoured by Stieglitz, De Zayas, and "291".<sup>78</sup> Issue

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from Stieglitz to De Zayas, 20 March 1916, in *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, p. 201.

<sup>74</sup> Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography*, p. 158.

<sup>75</sup> Physical copies of the original available to the public are few in number especially in England; English libraries have only the Arno Press reprint, though the Victoria and Albert lists a complete set of originals as missing, and has only original issues 5/6. An original issue of Number 1 fetched €2,356.00 in a German specialist auction in 2007. (Weltkunst at <http://www.weltkunst.de/kunstmarkt/index.html>, accessed August 2007, page now extinct).

<sup>76</sup> Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* Chapter 2, 'Consuming Investments', pp. 42-76.

<sup>77</sup> Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> *291* No. 1 (March 1915), column 3, p.[2].

number 2, for instance, contains the following two statements which distinguish between the artistic and the commercial:

The flower show in Paris is an event in the world of art as well as horticulture .. That good gardener of yours [America's] is trying the artistic ... There are no florists in New York. A florist is an artist. We have flower dealers.

The front page is devoted to the idea of commerce in art:

#### ECONOMIC LAWS AND ART:

[on the Montross Show of American Moderns]

The mere fact that such an exhibition can take place on Fifth Avenue where rents must be paid, is an important indication of the change of public attitude, and the added fact that the gallery was usually crowded at twenty-five cents per head, shows that the interest is not spotty but widespread. In short, it is safe to announce that cubism or futurism, or whatever else these men call their work, is not only beginning to pay its way, but is undergoing the trying ordeal of being the fashion ... did the public interest, aroused by 291 and the big Armory Exhibition of French Moderns, create a demand which our men are trying consciously or unconsciously to supply? [...] [T]hus leaving to the buying public an interesting opportunity of furthering modern thought by weeding out the true from the false.<sup>79</sup>

According to the first statement, then, an American cannot be both an artist and a business person, a florist and a dealer. According to the second 'our men' (artists) must be trying, perhaps 'unconsciously' to supply an economic demand. In addition, the public are said to show their appreciation by paying. The excerpt is notable for its references to exact prices (twenty-five cents) as an indication of the value of the art in terms of 'a change in public attitude', clearly associating cultural value with financial worth.

#### *Conclusion*

In spite of all this ambiguity of expression, De Zayas' own concentration on financial rewards led to a permanent dissociation between the Stieglitz and De Zayas galleries, which clearly progresses during the production of *291*. The announcement on the front page of the first issue, for instance, was:

The work of "291" will be continued at 291 Fifth Avenue in the same spirit and manner as heretofore ... the MODERN GALLERY is but an additional expression of "291"

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<sup>79</sup> De Zayas, 'Economic Laws and Art', *291* No. 2 (April 1915), front cover, column 2; *Ibid.*, column 3. Note in this passage De Zayas' lack of distinction between cubism and futurism.

An exchange of letters between De Zayas and Stieglitz indicates the experimental nature of “291” but it also sets out De Zayas’ detailed business arrangements, and his assurance to Stieglitz that “291” and The Modern Gallery would not be in competition but would complement one another:

Now comes a very important point to decide: Which will be the exact relation between “291” and the “Modern Gallery”?

We have already agreed on principle about a general program that is to say that “291” will be a place for experiments, where the evolution of modern art will be continued or at least will be tried to be continued and that the “Modern Gallery” will be the business side of 291.

Mrs. Meyer, Picabia and myself will work in the “Modern Gallery” for the development of the interest of the public in modern art from the commercial point of view, and in the selection of the work with which we are going to create that interest ... **But none of us will ever do anything or take any step without the full agreement of those who compose our society:** Mrs. Meyer, Mr. Meyer, you, Picabia, and myself. I don’t count Haviland yet because I am not **quite** sure whether he will like to be with us under the present conditions.

...

It is clearly understood that in the “Modern Gallery” the work of Picabia and my work will be conspicuous for their absence. We will eliminate it principally in order to have a greater freedom of action and also to avoid people thinking that we open the “Modern Gallery” for our personal advantage. Of course whenever it will be necessary to bring out Picabia’s work or my own we will do so, but only under exceptional circumstances. In no way we will try to make a display of our work.<sup>80</sup>

In an edited edition, Francis Naumann includes the correspondence as an appendix to De Zayas’ original recollection of the period, *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*.<sup>81</sup> According to De Zayas’ records, however, in spite of his ‘exceptional circumstances’ claim, Picabia’s work was exhibited on the Modern Gallery’s opening in October 1915 and January 1916.<sup>82</sup> It is notable perhaps that his aim was to ‘avoid people thinking’ that the gallery was for personal gain, whether it was or not being a different question. We will see a similar manoeuvre in the next chapter, in a letter of Stanton MacDonald Wright regarding the placement of his pictures in the influential Forum exhibition of 1916.

Soon afterwards, in an interesting article in *Camera Work*, Stieglitz printed a ‘withheld circular’, an anaphoric manifesto which had been planned to print along with the first issue of *291*, but was eventually decided against:

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<sup>80</sup> De Zayas to Stieglitz, 1 September 1915, *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, p. 196, emphasis in original.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-137, ‘Exhibitions at the Modern and De Zayas Galleries’.

The traditions of '291', which are now well known to the public, will be upheld in every respect by the new gallery.

It is the purpose of the Modern Gallery to serve the public by affording it the opportunity of purchasing, at unmanipulated prices, whatever '291' considers worthy of exhibition. It is the purpose of the Modern Gallery to serve the producers of these works by bringing them into business touch with the purchasing public on terms of mutual justice and mutual self-respect.

It is the purpose of the Modern Gallery to further, by these means, the development of contemporary art both here and abroad, and to pay its own way by reasonable charges.<sup>83</sup>

The Modern Gallery was thus initially set up to be an approved outlet for "291". Stieglitz later offered, with his rationale for *291* the magazine, an explanation for why the two galleries, and the magazine as representative, were no longer associated:

Mr. De Zayas, after experimenting for three months on the lines contemplated, found that practical business in New York and "291" were incompatible. In consequence he suggested that "291" and the Modern Gallery be separated. The suggestion automatically constituted a separation.<sup>84</sup>

De Zayas went on to concentrate on trying to make the Modern Gallery and its successor, the De Zayas Gallery, commercially successful, and produced very little art of his own until the 1930s, when he took up painting.<sup>85</sup> It is curious, given Stieglitz's strongly-stated position, that the 'withheld circular' was ever even conceived, or that he ever considered the possibility of the business association suggested in De Zayas' early letters. The phrase 'worthy of exhibition' in this paragraph also seems significant; 'worthy' of what, exactly? If '291' did *not* consider itself an 'exhibition' there is nevertheless an unmistakable inclusion of the idea of sale in that word, and further in the notion that '291' would thus retain those works which were *unworthy* of exhibition. And although De Zayas' terms are florid, the meaning is clear: The Modern Gallery would finance its exhibitions with 'reasonable charges' in terms of sales commissions.

The difference between the attitudes of the two men was clearly not, therefore, a straightforward division between an art-for-art's-sake position and an art-for-

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<sup>83</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, *Camera Work* 48 (October 1916), p. 63.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>85</sup> De Zayas, *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, 'Afterword' by Francis Naumann, pp. 132-133.

commercial-gain position. It was an exact and contentious example of Rainey's 'unstable synthesis', calling into question as it does the whole nature of the division between art and commerce, or the commercial and the cultural, which was so prominently addressed during that era of American cultural development. This ambiguity is of course further complicated by the magazine's sponsorship. As in the case of *The Seven Arts*, *291*'s sponsorship came largely from an independent industrial source: the money of Agnes Ernst Meyer and the bank whose profits so amply supported husband, and Haviland's money which had brought him to America, and Harvard, from Limoges, his family having installed him as American head of the French 'Haviland Porcelain Company'.<sup>86</sup> But the presence of his work and that of Meyer in the pages of *291* puts it in a different position from that of *The Seven Arts*, which was expressly contracted to be produced independently from its sponsor. Either way, only that extent of experiment was allowed which did not threaten the ascendancy of the machine which is the capitalist economy. In spite of De Zayas and Stieglitz's professed anti-commercialism, *291* functioned as a showcase for "291" and, of course, for the Modern Gallery. The change in De Zayas' attitude to commerce brought about a rift between him and Stieglitz, and their detailed and intimate correspondence appears to have ceased, apart from certain communications on practical matters, after the magazine had folded. The polyphony, the multiplicity, the acknowledgement of the modernist project that is contained in the editorials, and the extraordinary mixture of text and inter-disciplinary experiment are all echoed, in *291*, by its complex attitude to the value of modern commerce.

The next chapter of this thesis discusses a magazine first published two months after *291* published its final issue. The discussion will foreground the many contrasting features of *The Soil*'s route to the modern while highlighting its various rivalries with the ethos of *291* but revealing some unexpected, and perhaps unintended, similarities. Robert Coady's magazine *The Soil*, also emanating from a small gallery in New York, was self-consciously unconventional and like *291* had a desire to explore the nature of modernity, particularly American modernity. While the two magazines are frequently bracketed together as examples of the briefly popular New York Dada of the early nineteen-twenties, they seem to me to be much too different to be positioned as two

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<sup>86</sup> Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography* pp. 136-137.

sides of the same pre-modernist coin. Their rivalry was both commercial and aesthetic, which will become apparent in the following pages. Commerce was addressed through the text of *291*, through its ethos, through its sponsorship, and through its ultimate position in the commercial ‘art world’, in spite of the prolonged ‘anti-commercial’ stance of Alfred Stieglitz. Conversely while *The Soil* professes to support popular performance art, sport, literature, and commercial artefacts together, as a ‘new unit’ of American art, its ethical position is greatly at odds with that stated in *291* and in fact borders on the Romantic. The next chapter will therefore discuss *The Soil*, often in comparison and contrast to *291*; it will cast light not only on the varied nature of the pre-World War One American response to modernity but also on the various and conflicting ways in which the relationship between art and commerce was addressed.

From *Le Mot*, Paris, March 6, 1915.

I wish to tell you something that asters on the sublime, and to let you hear anxiety on the terrible, the unmerciful of Madame. He confessed that she had had, twenty years ago, an illegitimate child and that that child was fighting in the Argonne.

Then, as Madame F. reproached the girl for having remained silent so long and was consoling her by reminding her that her own son was also on the firing line. "Oh, madame," answered the maid, "it is not the same thing; my boy by his fine actions has given me back my honor!"

Lasting remorse, humble pride, patient waiting... This is the true French woman.

[illegible]

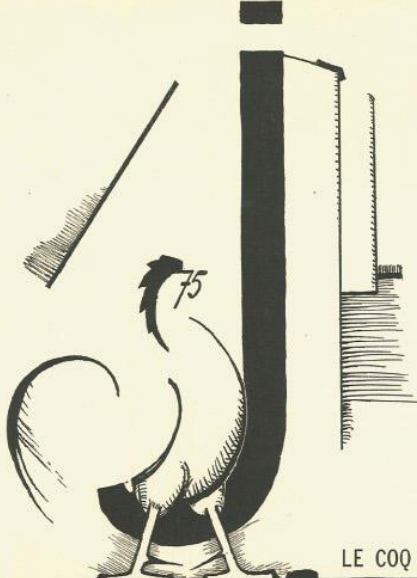
Apollinaire that profound observer of the superficial brought to artistic significance the squeaking of the "new shoes of the poet." Unhappily we have no poet in New York who could sing of the forms of the shoes that women are wearing now.

For the first time the spirit of modern art has been genuinely manifested in this country.

Women's shoes reveal a new mentality at work.

They break away from convention. They give the pleasure of the unexpected.  
They are the expression of a love of disharmony.  
They have no rhythm.  
They have no balance.  
They synthesize the abstract.  
Another profound observer of the superficial said that perhaps the spirit of modern art having failed to reach the heads of the Americans is trying to get into their feet.

Among all the talking and writing and other forms of trouble-making that our modern social unrest has produced, one person only goes steadily onward, the **AMERICAN BUSINESS MAN**. Too far-sighted and too aware of his own worth to lose either his optimism or his efficiency during the many years of constant unintelligent attack, too preoccupied by important events

[illegible]

LE COO GAULOIS

DRAWING BY STEIGER

ON THIS CHAIN HANGS THE RING

FE R O U N D W I N E C E L L A R D O O R

SE GARHUMI D O R

MY OFFICE

SA F E D E P O S T B O X

I T L Y M S

J. B. KERFOOT

—TWELVE NUMBERS A YEAR—  
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, REGULAR EDITION:—ONE DOLLAR. SPECIAL EDITION LIMITED TO ONE HUNDRED COPIES ON SPECIAL PAPER—TWELVE NUMBERS, FIVE DOLLARS. SINGLE COPIES REGULAR EDITION, AT PRESENT:—Nos. 1, 2, 3:—TEN CENTS. SINGLE COPIES DE

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 DE ZAYAS, ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY  
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VELLUM: ONE DOLLAR.  
PUBLISHED BY "291", 291 FIFTH  
AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.  
MAKE ALL REMITTANCES TO PAUL  
B. HAVILAND.

OUR NEXT ISSUE, NO. 4, WILL  
CONTAIN A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED  
POEM BY

PAUL VERLAINE  
FROM AN AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT  
IN POSSESSION OF THE HEIRS OF THE  
LATE PHILIPPE BURTY, ART CRITIC  
AND FRIEND OF THE FRENCH POET.

Figure 2: Sample page, 291 No. 3, back page



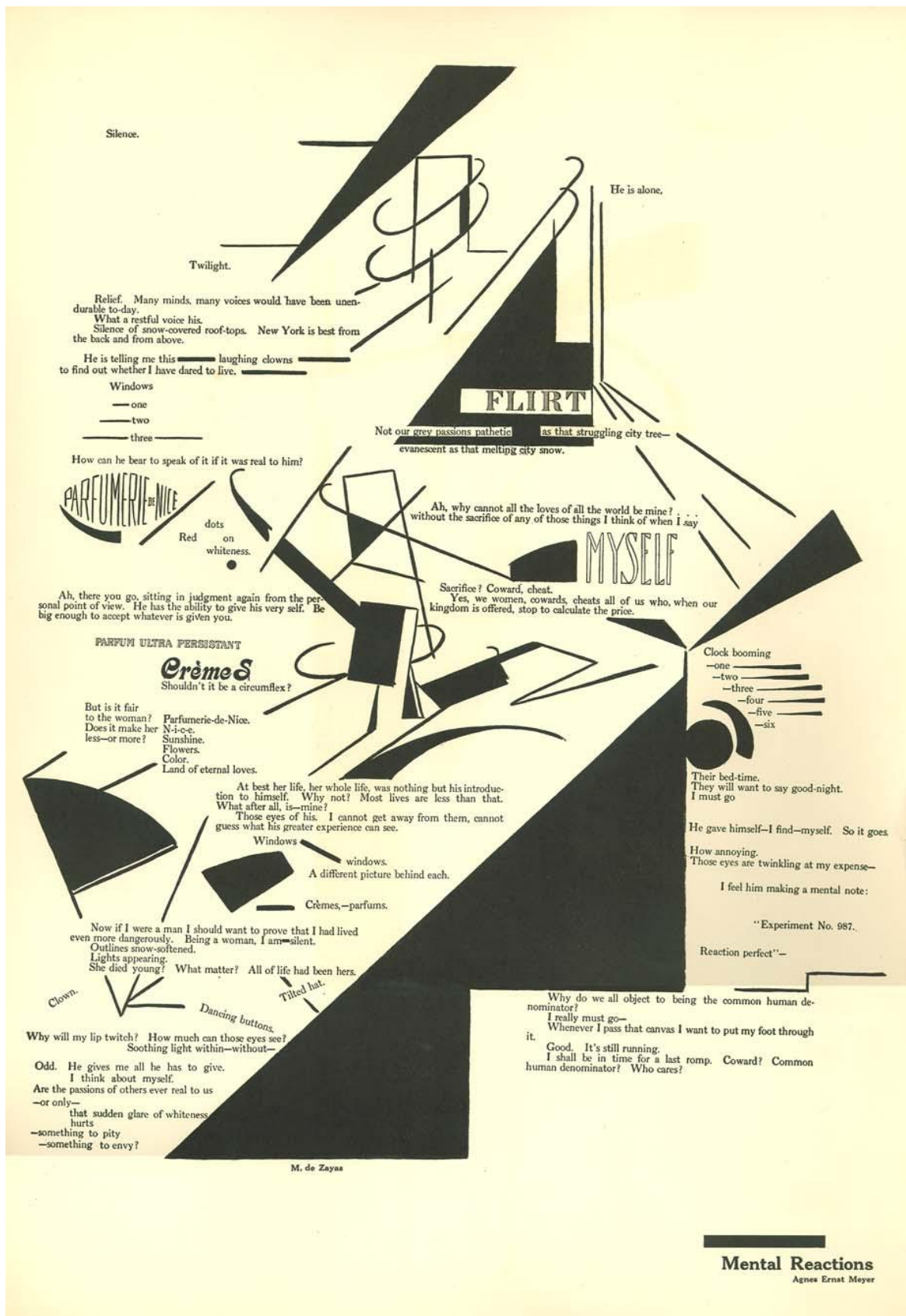


Figure 3: Agnes Meyer and Marius De Zayas, 'Mental Reactions', 291 No. 2, p.3.

Bellovées Fatales. No. 12.

*La passion des vagues*

*(ossia) (Gloria) dans une tige de  
des mandolines le chœur*

*L = 92 (moderato)*

*ff (cr) P*  
*Chant (Femmes)*  
*ah!*

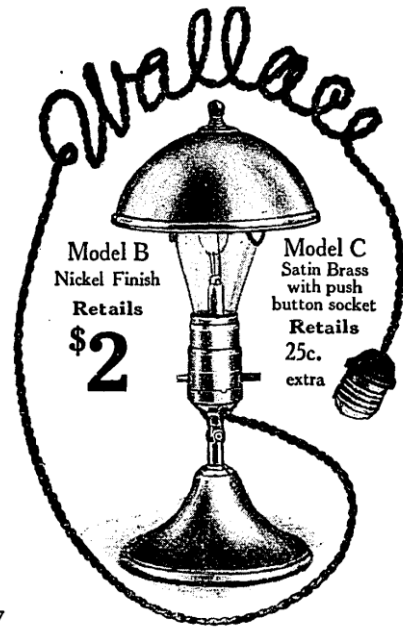
*très f. (crescendo)*  
*Je t'a-tou-ché*

*(ossia)*  
*glia. avec la voix*

*note dans le ciel tout le firmament  
représenté par les paroles  
sacré = hui*

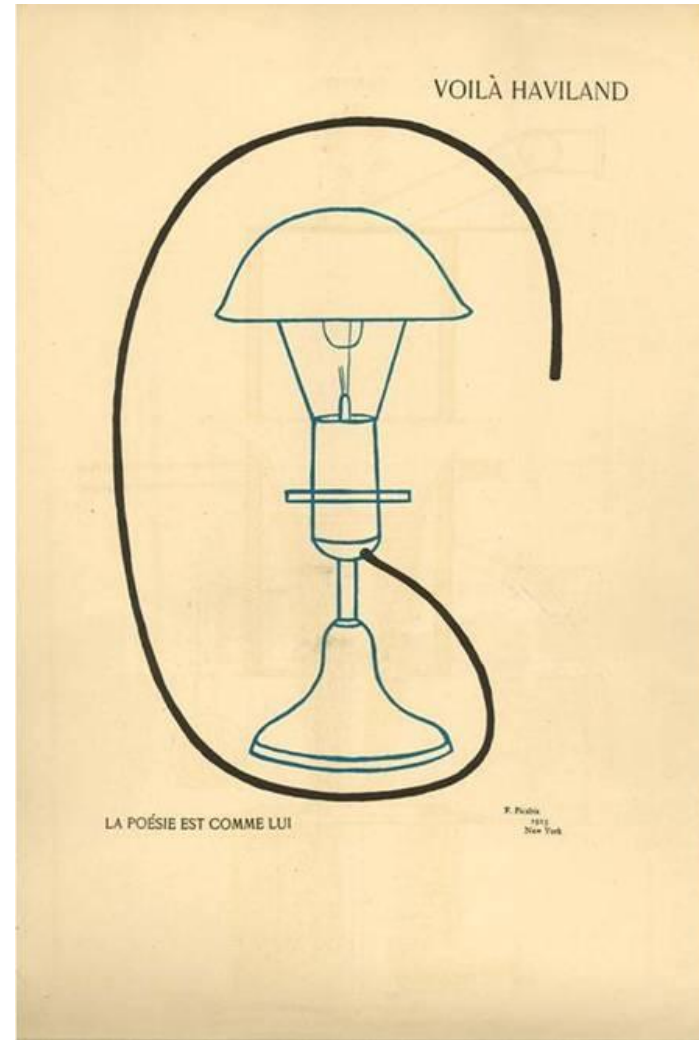
*Chant (Femmes)*  
*de la parole de Christ-chaos! de la parole de Christ-chaos!*

Figure 4: Alberto Savinio, manuscript from *Les Chants De La Mi-Mort*, 291 No. 2, back page.



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Figure 5: Picabia, Portrait of Paul Haviland, 291 5-6, back cover, and advertisement source (from Camfield, 'The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia', 1966).





## 291

PUBLISHED TWELVE TIMES A YEAR.—*Twelve numbers ONE DOLLAR.—Special edition limited to one hundred copies on special paper.—Twelve numbers FIVE DOLLARS.—Single copies ONE DOLLAR. Published by "291", 291 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.—MAKE ALL REMITTANCES TO PAUL B. HAVILAND. Sample copy sent FREE on request to you or your friends. Requests for copies of PARTICULAR NUMBERS should be accompanied by TEN CENTS IN POSTAGE STAMPS.*

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TWELVE NUMBERS A YEAR.—*Subscription price, regular edition, TWO DOLLARS, for Numbers 1-12, excluding the Double Number 7-8.—Special edition limited to one hundred copies on special paper, for Numbers 1-12, including special portfolio and box, TWENTY DOLLARS.—Regular edition, single copies, Ten Cents.—Single copies of Double Numbers 5-6, 10-11, Twenty cents; single copies of Double Number 7-8, FIVE DOLLARS.—Single copies de luxe, prices on application.—ADDRESS REMITTANCES TO "291", 291 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Published by "291", 291 Fifth Avenue, New York.*

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PUBLISHED BY "291", 291 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

MAKE ALL REMITTANCES TO PAUL B. HAVILAND.

\*

Figure 6: Sliding Scale of Prices, 291 various issues.

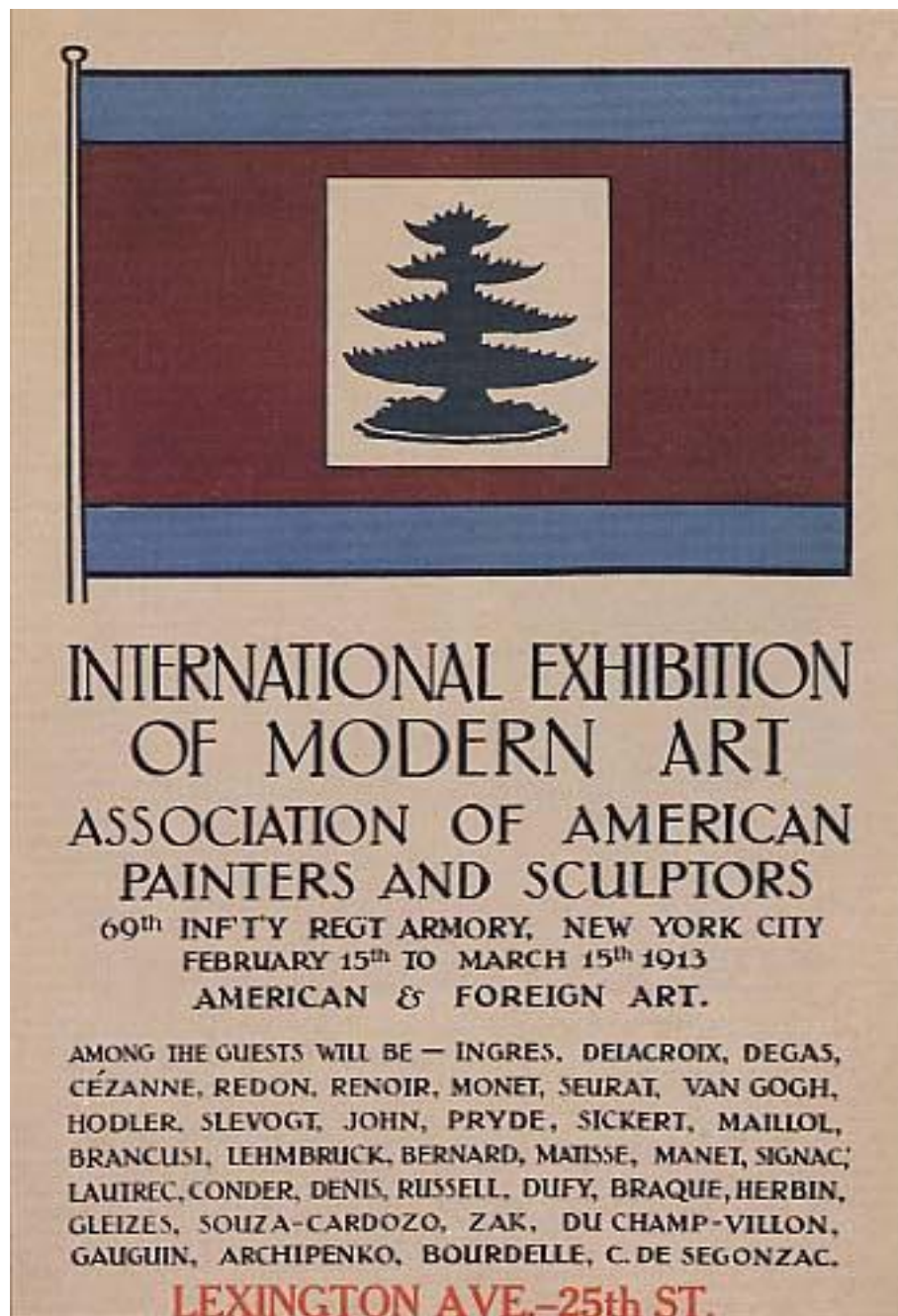


Figure 6a: Armory Show catalogue, 1913.

## Chapter 3 *The Soil*: ‘Market Value Permanently Guaranteed’

### *Introduction*

The ephemeral but eclectic magazine *The Soil: A Magazine of Art* has been critically appraised at various points in the literary twentieth century. Gorham Munson’s posthumously-published memoir, *The Awakening Twenties*, devotes a chapter to it and to its influence on American 1920s culture. Munson considered it to have influenced *The Blind Man* and *Broom* and also to be ‘more aggressively American than its nationalistic contemporary, *Seven Arts*.’<sup>1</sup> Robert Alden Sanborn, a contributor to *The Soil* and friend of the editor Robert J. Coady, elegised Coady (who died of pneumonia in January 1921) in a 1922 obituary in *Broom*.<sup>2</sup> Recent critical work such as that of Michael North have positioned *The Soil* as a contributor to a general mingling of high and low culture in pursuit of modernist ideals. Ruth Bohan has placed the magazine in a chronological line charting the influence of Walt Whitman on American art through the twentieth century. Hoffman calls the magazine ‘an interesting document which reveals one man’s search for a popular aesthetic’.<sup>3</sup> Dickran Tashjian views *The Soil*’s “skyscraper” aesthetic and what he sees as its fragmentary nature, as one more example of early American proto-Dada, along with 291.<sup>4</sup> This last pervasive view is one which I will seek to question here, along with *The Soil*’s aesthetics. Jacqueline Vaught Brogan foregrounds Coady’s pastiche

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<sup>1</sup> Gorham Munson *The Awakening Twenties: A Memoir-History of a Literary Period* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985). p.44. Critical appraisals of *The Soil* are as follows: Robert Alden Sanborn, ‘A Champion in the Wilderness’, *Broom* 3.2 (October 1922), pp. 174-179; Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, Chapter 5, ‘Robert J. Coady, *Soil* and the Skyscraper Primitives’; Judith Zilczer, ‘Robert J. Coady, Man of *The Soil*’, *Dada/Surrealism* 14, ‘New York Dada’, 31-43; Juan A. Suarez, ‘City Space, Technology, Popular Culture: The Modernism of Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler’s *Manhatta*’, *Journal of American Studies* 36.1, 2002, 85-106; Zilczer, “‘Who Will Paint New York?’ “The World’s New Art Center” and the Skyscraper Paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe’, *American Art* 5.1/2, 1991, 86-107. Also see: Ruth L. Bohan, *Looking into Walt Whitman: American Art 1850-1920* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), pp. 166-180; Dennis Raverty, *Struggle Over The Modern: Purity and Experience in American Art Criticism 1900-1950* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005). Michael North, ‘Transatlantic Transfer: Little Magazines and Euro-American Modernism’, paper presented at the *Modernist Magazines Conference: The Modernist Atlantic*, De Montfort University, July 2007, on line at <<http://tinyurl.com/2jolhj>>; Michael North, ‘Art Value and Market Value Both Guaranteed’, *Flair Symposium: The State and Fate of Modernism*, Harry Ransom Humanities Center, University of Texas, 20 February 2004. North cites a pre-publication copy of Raverty’s manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Alden Sanborn, ‘A Champion in the Wilderness’, *Broom* 3.2 (October 1922), pp. 174-179.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> Dickran Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives: Dada and the American Avant-Garde 1910-1925* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press), p. 71.

‘Cosmopsychographical Organization’ as part of a concomitant ‘cubist’ movement in art and literature, in a thesis which cites examples from various magazines.<sup>5</sup> While all of these commentaries appreciate the unusual qualities of *The Soil* and in some ways operate to create a legend out of the magazine and its editor, it seems that none pay very much attention to what its market position, its likely readership, and its explicit criticism of modern art really indicate about its contribution to the easing of cultural barriers, or to twentieth-century artistic theory, preferring to read it as a jolly paean to cultural equality.

Importantly, far from *The Soil* and *291* being assumed to be united in the development of American modernism, they are here contrasted in the light of a significant aesthetic and economic rivalry between the editors and producers, an adversary dialogic which is expressed in the pages of *The Soil*. The magazine undoubtedly addresses and contests opinions expressed in *291*, and while *The Soil* was lauded in the pages of the ‘avant-garde’ *Rogue*, Coady’s actual aesthetic position, which will be explored here, was ambiguous. Furthermore the magazine also had a bearing on the way that Robert Coady advertised and sold works of art from his gallery. Michael North has remarked that Coady ‘competed with Stieglitz as both editor and entrepreneur’, and supports this by suggesting that *The Soil* ‘lampooned *Camera Work* directly and indirectly, simply by integrating text and photographs in such a way that neither was absolutely primary.’<sup>6</sup> Though the rivalry is evident in *The Soil*, the integration of content in itself would not be sufficiently effective as a lampoon. Comparably, a number of issues of *Camera Work* also present text and photographs precisely so that neither are primary, particularly indeed the issue which, as will become evident, is also satirised in *The Soil*. The rivalry between the two gallery curators was, also, less ‘simple’ than North implies, and more fundamental: it was not merely between *Camera Work* and *The Soil*, occasioning gentle jibes between gallery owners, but between Coady and the whole group associated with “291” the gallery. As North details, there was animosity between Coady and the *Forum* exhibition group of 1917, whose committee, assembled by Willard Huntington Wright, included Stieglitz. North’s argument draws

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<sup>5</sup> Jacqueline Vaught Brogan, *Part of the Climate: American Cubist Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Michael North, *Camera Works: Photography and the Twentieth Century Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 62.

extensively on the work of Dennis Raverty, who includes a detailed description of this latter disagreement in *Struggle Over the Modern*. In his history of ‘contrary bids for the soul of modern art in America’ Raverty suggests that by this time, the conflict was not so much between the traditional formalism of nineteenth-century American art and twentieth-century experimentalism but between different factions which had the reputation of being ‘avant-garde’.<sup>7</sup> Having shown in the preceding chapter the way that *291* was itself the site of considerable commercial tension, my purpose in this chapter is to detail how various parts of *The Soil*’s text exposed this aesthetic and economic rivalry. In the course of the discussion the question is raised, however, of whether this rivalry is in fact between two avant-garde factions, as Raverty suggests, or whether, after all, more fundamental differences are at stake.

### *The Soil’s Editor*

Robert J. Coady was sole editor of *The Soil*. Despite the name of Michael Brenner appearing as co-editor at a Paris address, there appears to have been little communication between the two men about the nature and contents of the magazine. Its editorial matter and choice of material therefore largely represent Coady’s ideas. This section therefore begins with a description of him, his background and his art gallery. It continues with a description of the overall format of the magazine which appears to have been integral to *The Soil*’s expression. This is followed by a discussion of *The Soil*’s initial approach to ‘American Art’, which can be seen to be closely connected to its commercial position. Finally I examine Coady’s aesthetics and his ideas on ‘taste’, and whether these are compatible with the commonly-held idea that *The Soil*, with an editor who was a trader in the American art market, could actually be said to mediate between the ‘modern’ and the commercial.

As Munson concurs, by the end of 1920s, Coady was already less than a legend. Even at his death in 1921 his fame merited only a small obituary space near the bottom of the column in *The New York Times*.<sup>8</sup> The most extensively researched biographical

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<sup>7</sup> Dennis Raverty, *Struggle Over The Modern*. See also North, ‘Art Value and Market Value Both Guaranteed’.

<sup>8</sup> Obituary of Robert J. Coady, *New York Times* (7 January 1921).



sketch available is still the one published by Judith Zilczer in 1975.<sup>9</sup> Coady was born in Manhattan to an Irish mother and a Canadian father, and studied art at the Art Students' League of New York which was also attended by his business associate, sculptor Michael Brenner. He was also a member of the Salmagundi art group in Greenwich Village. He and Brenner were in Paris together 'some time between 1905 and 1912' and became friendly with the exceptionally talented painter Max Weber, who was for a short time a protégé of Alfred Stieglitz. Weber introduced them to Henri Rousseau and to the circle surrounding Gertrude and Leo Stein at 27 Rue de Fleurus, which included Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso. Coady was also known to Mabel Dodge, the wealthy hostess, whose New York salon evenings he attended.<sup>10</sup> On Coady's return to America at the outbreak of World War I he opened the Washington Square Gallery, financed partly by Brenner, who remained in Paris. Alfred Kreymborg, editor of *Others*, wrote a glowing report of Coady's gallery opening in the 1914 *New York Morning Telegraph*.<sup>11</sup> Later Coady transferred the gallery to 489 Fifth Avenue. At some point he obtained what appear to have been exclusive rights to the sale of Picasso's work in New York, negotiated by Brenner through Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Picasso's Paris agent.

Munson had this to say about Coady's character:

Coady's temperament was belligerent. He has been described by an art critic who knew him as a man whose brow suggested intelligence while his mouth suggested a racetrack tout. And Coady was indeed immersed in certain expressions of American life that some might have called more congenial to touts.<sup>12</sup>

Munson does not make the touts' 'expressions' explicit, but may have been thinking of Coady's interest in boxing, which is evident in the magazine, or perhaps of his general interest in popular culture. The quotation excludes the possibility that a

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<sup>9</sup> Judith Zilczer, 'Robert J. Coady, Forgotten Spokesman for Avant-Garde Culture in America', *American Art Review* 11.6 (September-October 1975), pp. 77-90; additional information supplied by the unpublished letters of Michael Brenner to his sister, from the Smithsonian Collection.

<sup>10</sup> See letters from Mabel Dodge to Gertrude Stein in *A History of Having a Great Many Times Not Continued to Be Friends: The Correspondence Between Mabel Dodge and Gertrude Stein, 1911-1934* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1996), and also Judith Zilczer, "'The World's New Art Center': Modern Art Exhibitions in New York City, 1913-1918", *Archives of American Art Journal* 14.3 (1974), pp. 2-7.

<sup>11</sup> Alfred Kreymborg, 'The New Washington Square: The Rendezvous For Persons of Genius', *Morning Telegraph* (New York), 6 December 1914, S2 p.1, referenced in Virginia Budny, 'Gaston Lachaise's American Venus: The Genesis and Evolution of Elevation', *American Art Journal* 34 (2003-2004), p. 139, n. 116.

<sup>12</sup> Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, p. 40.

racetrack tout might also possess intelligence or that his interest in ‘certain expressions of American life’ may be equally valid with that of the intelligent in other fields, rather the reverse, despite Munson’s considerable admiration for Coady and his magazine. One purpose of *The Soil* was to question this kind of automatic distinction, though as this chapter will show, it was not wholly successful in doing so.

Both the gallery and *The Soil* were in a desperately insecure financial position; a series of letters from Michael Brenner to his sister indicates a lack of communication between Coady and Brenner, and Brenner’s perception of neglect, by Coady, of the gallery’s finances.<sup>13</sup> Brenner’s letters mention the ‘disgust and anger’ of a financier, Rosenberg. It seems just possible, judging from these letters, that Coady appropriated money from the sale of pictures supplied by Brenner from France: ‘I can’t believe that if Coady has sold any part of the goods consigned to him, he has used the part of the money due to the owner of the goods such a thing is abuse of confidence and is punished with prison’ reads Brenner’s anguished letter about the ‘5th Avenue venture’, successor to the Washington Square Gallery. It therefore seems possible, even likely, that *The Soil* ceased production because of financial difficulties. It appears from Brenner’s letters that Coady was financially independent, whereas Brenner’s position was less secure.<sup>14</sup> *The Soil* acted partly as an informal catalogue to the gallery, using, as it often does, reproductions of available paintings and sculptures, and excerpts from books which were sold there.

### *Form and Format in The Soil*

The *Soil*’s total output consisted of five issues, between December 1916 and July 1917. By 1919, although he was suffering from long bouts of ill-health, Coady appears still to have been interested in resuscitating *The Soil* as indicated in a letter to

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<sup>13</sup> Brenner writes: ‘I couldn’t accept with an easy mind the fact that Coady couldn’t send me even so little as 50 dollars after all my appeals and notwithstanding the fact that the gallery owes me more than that. Then, in his last letter to me dating back about 6 weeks Coady comes out for the first time with the statement that unless the gallery gets some action soon, we’ll be in an awfull [sic] hole.’ (Smithsonian Collection, Victor Brenner Papers, letter, 26 January 1917, Michael Brenner to Fanny).

<sup>14</sup> ‘I can understand he can very well do without the small profit that piece of business would have brought him in but my situation is different and he knows it’ (Michael Brenner, unpublished letter to Fanny, 23 March 1920, Smithsonian Collection, Victor Brenner Papers) where Brenner appears still to be struggling with the final wind-up of the business and the retrieval of some of his money.

the Katherine Dreier, artist and patron of the arts, on *Soil* notepaper, at least a year after the last edition had been published.<sup>15</sup> Some of the articles and the poetry make their first appearance but much of the material, especially in the later issues, is reprinted. Articles and pictures are taken, for instance, from an early book of anthropology published by Carl Lumholtz in 1909, which is also offered for sale from *The Soil*; reproductions of pictures by Ingres, Rousseau, and a twentieth-century New York painter called Chin Yin, whose paintings were hung in the gallery, also appear. Arthur Cravan's article 'Oscar Wilde is Alive!' most of which had first appeared in Cravan's own magazine *Maintenant* four years previously, occupies a good deal of space over two issues. It is translated by an associate, Enrique Cross, and is also accompanied by some fictional 'previously unpublished' photographs and letters which are acknowledged with an announcement in the relevant issue.<sup>16</sup> An excerpt from a translation of 'The Poems of Nahuatl' which is from *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry* by Daniel Garrison Brinton (incorrectly credited in two issues of the magazine as 'G. D. Brinton'), was first published in Philadelphia in 1887. This and the Lumholtz excerpts indicate some support for the then newly-fashionable interest in anthropology and the 'primitive'; Coady had held exhibitions of African carvings intended for sale. Also reproduced in *The Soil* are lengthy excerpts from Ambroise Vollard's *Cézanne*, already published and on sale through Coady in a limited collector's 'De Luxe' edition with an original etching by Cézanne.<sup>17</sup> The idea of a 'little magazine' necessarily being the carrier of original work is again in question here; it is rather the juxtaposition of different types of material which makes *The Soil* unique as a total structure. Furthermore, as already stated, *The Soil* realises the commercial benefit to the gallery of articles and advertisements which reflect one another.

The five issues further contain, interspersed with more conventional art reproductions, stark photographs of machinery and engines, photographs of Charlie Chaplin, Toto the Clown and Annette Kellermann the 'artistic swimmer', Jack Johnson the boxer and Bert Williams the popular 'black-face' black entertainer, all accompanied by

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<sup>15</sup> See for instance a letter from Coady to Katharine Dreier, March 1918 (Katharine Dreier papers, Beinecke Rare Book Collection, Yale University), in which Coady refers to the idea of resuscitating *The Soil*.

<sup>16</sup> *The Soil* 1.4 (April 1917), 'Announcement', p. 144.

<sup>17</sup> 'Books to be Obtained from "The Soil"', *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1917), p. 52.

pertinent related text. Besides the Nahuatl poem mentioned, there are anthropological illustrations, excerpts from the Book of Job, and reproductions of the prayers of ancient Mexican races. There are also, in the first two issues, cheerfully serious articles, with accompanying pictures, on the Woolworth Building (the definitive skyscraper) and on window-dressing and engineering. Over the first two issues there are descriptions of the Zoo, and a piece on conjuring, ‘prestidigitation’.<sup>18</sup> ‘He has no “ism” to guide him’ is a caption added to a picture of the well-known rodeo rider Jess Stahl, rodeo then being a comparatively new form of mass entertainment.<sup>19</sup>

Importantly, the format of the magazine is intrinsic to a general levelling effect. In comparison to a very expensive, four-colour product like *291*, *The Soil* was materially only of moderately good quality, though Michael North’s description of it as ‘scrappy’ perhaps does at least the first two issues less than justice.<sup>20</sup> Monochrome, printed in Times Roman, the majority in fourteen-point, its text pages are surrounded with generous margins. The better-quality photographic plates are tissue-protected to prevent fading and smearing. Most of the picture plates are full page size, with the same wide margins, though where more than one picture is printed on the page, for instance in Coady’s extended review of the American Independent Artists’ exhibition of 1917, the layout is conventionally balanced.<sup>21</sup> The cover price was 25 cents, comparing with, for instance, *The Seven Arts* also at 25 cents and *Others* at 20 cents. (*291* of course cost only 10 cents, but as already pointed out, this cover price bore no relation to its actual cost of production.) In the first two issues especially, care is taken over *The Soil*’s presentation of each topic. A child’s drawing occupies the same space and prominence as a picture by Rousseau or a photograph of Jack Johnson or of a solid-looking engineering construction or an African sculpture. (See figure 7, p. 153). It is possible, of course, given the editor’s eye for the pragmatic, that this layout was also the simplest and quickest, and *The Soil* is decidedly not ‘experimental’ in its typesetting, nor even always original in the fiction and reviews that it offers.

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<sup>18</sup> Adam Hull Shirk, ‘Prestidigitation’, *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), p. 84. Shirk also wrote popular screen plays, at the time and until much later.

<sup>19</sup> Jess Stahl was one of the earliest rodeo riders, and evidently also suffered racial discrimination. See the African American Registry at <http://www.aaregistry.com/detail.php?id=2286>, accessed 30 March 2009; Acknowledging this mixture of content, Munson coined the phrase ‘Skyscraper Primitive’ as the title of a 1925 article, a phrase taken up by Tashjian for the title of his 1979 book on New York Dada, and subsequently incorporated into the vocabulary of cultural critics of the era.

<sup>20</sup> Michael North, ‘Transatlantic Transfer’, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *The Soil* 1.5 (July 1917), ‘The Indeeps’, pp. 202-211.

Nevertheless its correspondence of form and content helps to unify its disparate contents, and singles it out from other ‘little’ magazines of its era.

There is currently a resurgence of interest in *The Soil*, partly for its ‘proto-contemporary view of culture’, but if one were to try to place it purely in the annals of art history, its relative interest to modern critical study would probably be less. After all, as one academic has commented, ‘The Soil is an odd bird, not quite one thing or the other. It’s not surprising that it failed to find an audience; I hardly think art lovers would have found much to satisfy them.’<sup>22</sup> Yet it was, indeed, a small body of ‘art lovers’ who were the readers of this magazine, sold as it was from the gallery in Fifth Avenue, and at European offices in Paris and London. Judging at least by its advertisements, there is no reason to suppose that its readership was other than a ‘cultured’ minority. This point is raised again at the conclusion of this chapter as it is an important indicator of the position that *The Soil* occupies in the development of American modernism, particularly in the light of the following discussion, which shows that not only American commerce and the commercial artefact are intrinsic to the presentation and stated editorial intentions of *The Soil*, but that its business interests, in a number of surprising and much less obvious ways, dictate its content.

### *The Soil, Art and American Commerce*

Here we can usefully recall the advertisement in *The Seven Arts* claiming that it was possible ‘to be interesting and entertaining and still not publish interviews with Eva Tanguay, early anecdotes of Jess Willard, “red-blooded” fiction ... appreciation of Charlie Chaplin’s feet’.<sup>23</sup> The advertisement, for *The New Republic*, was an appeal to the ‘secret’ highbrow in its readers. Some critics of *The Soil* have noted the magazine’s presentation of the popular (including Charlie Chaplin’s general bodily dexterity) as a simple celebration of American diversity, of the breakdown of ‘cultural barriers’. The *New Republic* advertisement in *The Seven Arts* aimed to make highbrow interests desirable, assuming that enough papers already addressed the rest. The article in *The Soil*, written by Chaplin himself, is similar in tone, actually one of a number in

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<sup>22</sup> Donald Simpson (Department of Art History, University of Pittsburgh), e-mails to author, Feb 2008.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 78.

which Chaplin promoted himself as an artist as opposed to an entertainer.<sup>24</sup> In fact *The Soil* presents popular American entertainment as ‘a new unit’, a phrase implying that the position of ‘mass culture’ is subsumed and contained within some pre-established criteria of the elite. This idea is best illustrated by Coady’s first editorial: in *The Soil* No.1, he answers the many voices of the time which criticised America from within for its lack of artistic originality:

There is an American Art. Young, robust, energetic, naive, immature, daring and big spirited. Active in every conceivable field.

The Panama Canal, the Sky-scraper and Colonial Architecture. The East River, the Battery and the “Fish Theatre.”. The Tug Boat and the Steam-shovel. The Steam Lighter. The Steel Plants, the Washing Plants and the Electrical Shops. The Bridges, the Docks, the Cutouts, the Viaducts, the “Matt M. Shay” and the “3000”. Gary. The Polarine and the Portland Cement Works. Wright’s and Curtiss’s Aeroplanes and the Aeronauts. The Sail Boats, the Ore Cars. Indian Beadwork, Sculptures, Decorations, Music and Dances. Jack Johnson, Charlie Chaplin, and “Spike” in “The Girl in the Game”. Annette Kellermann, “Neptune’s Daughter.”. Bert. Williams, Rag-time, the Buck and Wing and the Clog. Syncopation and the Cake-Walk [...]  
This is American Art.

It is not a refined granulation nor a delicate disease – it is not an ism. It is not an illustration to a theory, it is an expression of life – a complicated life – American life. The isms have crowded it out of “the art world” and it has grown naturally, healthily, beautifully. It has grown out of the soil and through the race and will continue to grow. It will grow and mature and add a new unit to Art.<sup>25</sup>

*The Soil*, then, like 291, declared itself uninterested in ‘isms’. The American artistic community were imitative and its experiments were fatuous. Coady later writes ‘Many “new movements” have been started to find, or claiming to have found, the secret of design. We have had Cubism, Tubism, Orphism, Futurism, Synchronism [sic], Vorticism, and even Ismism’.<sup>26</sup> Thus, dismissing these products as irrelevant, Coady celebrates the new, not in the ‘isms’, which he sees as European, but in the mass productions of American life, and significantly an American ‘race’ which includes black and white citizens alike; the representation of race in all these magazines is briefly discussed in my concluding chapter. He looks to include, as a ‘new unit’ in the realm of ‘art’, this disparate list of products which are uniquely the product of American urban culture. The emphasis on city life distinguishes *The Soil*’s ideas from the artistic nationalist regionalism of the American post-depression era, but

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<sup>24</sup> See David Robinson, *Chaplin: His Life and Art* (London: Penguin, 2001), and Julian Smith, *Chaplin* (London: Columbus, 1986).

<sup>25</sup> R. J. Coady, from ‘American Art’, *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Coady means to refer to synchronism as practised by Stanton Macdonald Wright and Morgan Russell (see also later in this chapter); *The Soil* 1.5 (July 1917), p. 205.

it does identify a modernism that has urban America at its heart.<sup>27</sup> It makes for what is, in its particular rarefied context, a very individual publication.

The immediate critical reception of Coady's idea, at the time, was mixed. "The Soil", wrote Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson, editor of *The Little Review*, 'is obviously cracked.'<sup>28</sup> William Carlos Williams wrote, in *The Poetry Journal*:

*The Soil* makes a peculiar mistake in imagining that a mere ability to live well is art. J. P. Morgan was not an artist ... It is all very democratic, all very decorative, this apotheosis of trust magnates and trip hammers and Jack Johnsons. I like it. I think it makes a fine lively magazine. But mere adjustment of mechanical parts to a purpose – what shall I say?. I don't know. Perhaps I am wrong ... It is sometimes good but it is always handled in the same manner. There is no discrimination.<sup>29</sup>

Dickran Tashjian, writing in 1979, made a similar point. '[N]ot least of all, Coady placed everything on the same level of aesthetic value without making any distinctions' he writes.<sup>30</sup> It could be said, though, that the very essence of *The Soil*, and the reason it seems relevant today, is precisely this appearance of a lack of discrimination, its "democracy", its egalitarian presentation of the various facets of American life that Coady lists in his first editorial.

Dennis Raverty notes that Coady had written letters on the topic of 'American Art' to *The New York Sun* (the same paper for which Agnes Meyer of *291* had worked) in which he asked the Forum committee to back up their selection with 'proof' of its representative American-ness, which they had declared was one criterion for selection. The text of those 1916 letters prefigures *The Soil*'s title, derivation, and ethos:

They are blind to the great things that are going on around them. They are blind to the big spirit here that has grown out of the soil ... and has already expressed itself in terms of art that rank [s] with the great European epochs.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For a detailed discussion of the regionalist culture of the 1930s see Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999), Ch. 5, pp. 126-157. Thomas Hart Benton is the most notable proponent, supported by extreme right-wing critic Thomas Craven.

<sup>28</sup> Ezra Pound, letter to Margaret Anderson, 13 September 1917, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence* (New York: New Directions, 1988), ed. by Bryer, Friedman, and Scott, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup> Williams, William Carlos, 'America, Whitman, and the Art of Poetry', *Poetry Journal* 8.1 (November 1917), pp. 27-36.

<sup>30</sup> Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives*, p. 74.

<sup>31</sup> Coady, letters to *New York Sun* in "Current News", 12 and 19 March 1916, quoted in Raverty, *Struggle Over The Modern*, pp. 33-34.

After the first issue's announcement, Coady's ideas on art are amplified in the second issue of the magazine:

There are those whose tender years have been moulded and muddled in the public schools. There are those whose majorities have been provided with academic rule and law. There are those whose spectacular senses have been thrilled by the stunts of technique. There are those whose metaphysical proclivities have been excited to a dizzy hysteria by ismism.

Therefore my first chapter needs explanation.

By American Art I mean the aesthetic product of the human beings living on and producing from the soil of these United States. By American Art I mean an American contribution to art.

...

It can't come from the Academy or from the money old ladies leave. It can't come from imitating "Representation" or by substituting rule for taste ... It can't come from the substitution of dexterity for taste. It can't come from clouds or "the womb of the soul." It's not in the fifth dimension or the three hundred and sixty first degree ... It can't come from inventing nativities and organizing cosmoses; from smart sets or synchromocivic insolence.<sup>32</sup>

These first two editorials are quoted at length here because they are indicative of the nature and intent of *The Soil* and its subsequent association with the modern and with the products of commercial enterprise. Despite the fact that the magazine was very short-lived, and that its physical quality and the level of content varied from issue to issue, it is specific in its targets and, to a certain extent, faithful to its cause. Its ideas on, and its support for, the 'modern' will be approached again later in this chapter and expanded in the conclusion to this thesis.

### *The Soil and Commercial Rivalry*

It is clear from the passage above, though, that Coady's commercial ambition extends to the actual condemnation of rival institutions, and the statement on art just cited contains some very specific references, amounting almost to defamatory advertising. 'Organising cosmoses' and 'synchromocivic insolence' refer to the art movement synchromism and its perpetrators. Besides appearing in the exhibitions mentioned above, synchromists obtained prominent positions in the Forum exhibition; like much of the art supported by the "291" group, the synchromists were intent on artistic combination. According to Stanton MacDonald-Wright, colours could be equated to

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<sup>32</sup> Coady, 'American Art', *The Soil* 1. 2 (January 1917), pp. 54-55.



musical notes, and the spectrum to the musical scale.<sup>33</sup> ‘Inventing nativities’ is a reference to the title of a work by Man Ray called ‘Invention-Nativity’ (since retitled ‘Black Widow’), which was shown in the same exhibition.<sup>34</sup> The ‘fifth dimension’ perhaps relates to Duchamp’s or Picasso’s recognition of multi-dimensional mathematics in relation to art, following Jouffret, through Princet, and also referenced in Meyer’s editorial in *291*.<sup>35</sup> Coady’s comments function metonymically, indicating a view that American experimental art – the same experimentation that is promoted and prized by “291” the group and *291* the magazine – is pretentious. His targets are, effectively, rival gallery owners and the work in which they specialised. In the same issue (January 1917) Coady prints a photograph of an egg, presumably because it looks like a Brancusi sculpture. The caption, punning on the idea of birth and continuing the Man Ray lampoon, reads ‘Invention – nativity, by A. Chicken.’ The comment ‘cluck, cluck’ is added, the clucking of meaningless theorising and jargon. The protest is also exemplified on the page opposite by an excerpt from exhibition notes by Morgan Russell, another synchromist, whose name and words are enclosed in heavy multiple sets of quotation marks.<sup>36</sup>

*The Soil* was thus targeted at a readership from the informed, art-buying, gallery-visiting public in Fifth Avenue, to many of whom these references to a recent exhibition would be significant. Pound’s critique continued: ‘It is also obviously run to some extent in the interest of Coady’s gallery. There are some brains in the concern.’<sup>37</sup> *The Soil*’s emphasis on what might be classed as relatively unsophisticated products enables the magazine to position itself directly against the

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<sup>33</sup> Stanton MacDonald-Wright, *The Art of Stanton MacDonald Wright, Including a Treatise on Color* (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1967), p. 12 [1916]: ‘illustrative music is a thing of the past; today’s music has become abstract and wholly aesthetic, its effects depending on its rhythm and form. Painting certainly need not lag behind music.’

<sup>34</sup> Francis Naumann and Gail Stavitsky, *Conversion to Modernism – The Early Work of Man Ray* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press: Montclair Art Museum, 2003), Ch. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), and Miller, Arthur I., *Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time, and the Beauty That Causes Havoc* (New York: Basic Books, 2001). Also see Tony Robbin, *Shadows of Reality: The Fourth Dimension in Relativity, Cubism, and Modern Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) Chapter 3, which draws heavily on these two sources. Even earlier influences on Duchamp and the Futurists are the photographers of movement Edward Muybridge and especially Etienne Jules Marey. For a pictorial comparison of Marey’s picture and *Nude Descending a Staircase* see <http://www.photos-panographiques.com/article-26404359.html>, website of photographer Vincent Gruyer (accessed 24 October 2009).

<sup>36</sup> *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), between pp. 66-67 and 68-69.

<sup>37</sup> Ezra Pound, letter to Margaret Anderson, 13 September 1917, in Bryer ed., *The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, p. 122.

theoretical and self-consciously investigative approach to art taken by the group connected with “291”. *The Soil*, as Ruth Bohan points out, was produced in a Whitmanian spirit: ‘Whitman’s democratic idealism and radical iconoclasm energized Coady’s desire to stimulate a broader and conceptually bolder frame of reference for assessing American cultural production.’<sup>38</sup> Whether or not one agrees with Bohan that ‘radical iconoclasm’ underpins Coady’s magazine there was indeed, as Pound noted, a certain level of commercial expediency in publishing excerpts from books which were on sale in the gallery and in reproducing pictures which hung on its walls.

The two facts that Coady’s gallery was on the same Avenue as De Zayas’ Modern Gallery, and that the New York Art world was also undoubtedly aware of the connection between the Modern Gallery and “291”, assist the interpretation of another page of *The Soil*. A picture by Stanton MacDonald Wright, which Coady had reproduced from the Forum exhibition catalogue, was actually entitled “Organization, 5”.<sup>39</sup> Opposite Wright’s picture Coady has placed a rough collage which he has called ‘Cosmopsychographical organization’, satirising a fashionably Freudian terminology. Coady’s picture (Figure 8, p. 154) is deliberately composed from recognisable fragments of paintings, at least two of which appear reproduced whole in the same or subsequent issues of *The Soil*: there are parts of Cézanne’s *Bathers* (*The Soil* December 1916) and a Picasso *Violin* (*The Soil* December 1916).<sup>40</sup> There are also nudes from Matisse’s *Joy of Life* and parts of another picture which appears to be a Cézanne still life. The caption for this picture, as Tashjian points out, indeed ‘spoofed the pretentiousness of the aesthetic jargon which often accompanied modern art’:

“COSMOPSYCHOGRAPHICAL Organization,” or, the “plastic” “visualization” of my “intellectualized sensations.”. Wherein is “infinity struggling for birth in the womb of the soul,” “surrounded by swift moving nudes.” Wherein, also, “I pay no heed to mere objects” for, “the path moves towards direction” where I pay “homage” to “the absence of M.... D....”

<sup>38</sup> Bohan, *Looking Into Walt Whitman*, p.169.

<sup>39</sup> Listed in *The Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters March 13th-March 25th, 1916* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1916, reprint by Arno Press, 1968). A very similar painting by Wright from the same period is entitled ‘Conception symphony’, thus continuing the serious theme of genesis and nativity which, as we saw, also appears in *291* in relation to both photography and drawing, and which Coady satirises. See the Smithsonian collection at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden at <http://tinyurl.com/nzce93>.

<sup>40</sup> Copy of this page of *The Soil* taken from Rudolph Kuenzli, ed., *New York Dada* (New York: Willis, Locker, & Owens, 1986), p. 40. Zilczer does not identify the *Bathers* or the *Violin*. It is intriguing that Coady should use these paintings, which he enjoyed and would offer for sale if possible, rather than parts of other pictures of which he disapproved.

And, again, wherein I have “invented” “nativity” and “organized” “organization” 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times. “Thus” do I “kill the feeble and invigorate the strong,” my “creative vision handling the whole surface with supple control.”

“What does 2.91 mean to you,” when “in five months’ time those pictures will be worth twice what is being asked for them to-day?”<sup>41</sup>

Like the passage quoted above this is not, however, a merely generic ‘spoof’. Most of the details are accurately targeted and, it seems, directly quoted. Marius De Zayas and Paul De Haviland had produced the short but (then) notable *Study of the Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression* in 1913, published at “291”. ‘In the modern manifestation of plastic art, objective form is a necessary, but not in itself sufficient element. It is simply a vehicle for the expression of an intellectual conception’ is a typical sentence from that work.<sup>42</sup> In *Camera Work*, De Zayas also wrote, of his own oddly brilliant mathematical caricatures, ‘we can represent the plastic psychology and the plastic metaphysics of matter by their geometrical equivalents.’<sup>43</sup> The ‘Absence of M .... D....’ in Coady’s passage is a direct reference to a lost painting by Andrew Dasburg, entitled ‘The Absence of Mabel Dodge’.<sup>44</sup> Given Dodge’s patronage of Coady, he may have thought it prudent not to print her name in full. ‘M ... D...’ could, in this satire, also refer to Marcel Duchamp, who painted *Le roi et la reine entourés de nus vites* (the ‘swift-moving nudes’) in 1912.<sup>45</sup> ‘Kill the feeble’, ‘invigorate the strong’, and ‘creative vision handling the whole surface with subtle control’ are direct quotes from Morgan Russell’s own long description of his ‘synchronies’ in the 1916 Forum Exhibition Catalogue. Robert Jensen points out that this description had been prompted and heavily edited by the art critic and instigator of the exhibition, Willard Huntington Wright, brother of Stanton Macdonald Wright.<sup>46</sup> The Forum catalogue contains other ‘numbered’ items besides MacDonald-Wright’s ‘No. 5’, Thomas Hart Benton’s ‘Figure Organization No. 3’, and Charles Sheeler’s ‘Landscape No. 8’. Taken all together these titles perhaps prompted Coady’s list of numbers of ‘organizations’. The next phrase, ‘What does 2.91 mean to you?’, is clearly not an

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<sup>41</sup> Dickran Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives*, p. 78; *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 30.

<sup>42</sup> De Zayas and Haviland, *The Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression* (New York: “291” Galleries, 1913), p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Marius De Zayas, ‘Caricature’, *Camera Work* 46 (April 1914), p. 54.

<sup>44</sup> Remarkd by Zilczer, in “The World’s New Art Center”, p.4.

<sup>45</sup> Duchamp’s picture reproduced in Virginia Spate, *Orphism: The Evolution of Non-Figurative Painting 1910-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 307.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Jensen, ‘The Avant-Garde and the Trade in Art’, *Art Journal* 47.4 (Winter 1988), pp. 360-367; Morgan Russell, *The Forum Exhibition of Modern Painters*, page un-numbered.

arbitrary cash figure but a punning reference to the special issue of *Camera Work* dedicated to Stieglitz's "291" gallery which was prefaced 'What Does 291 Mean?':

The question: "What does '291' mean?" I remembered the half-conscious, invariable answer. I remembered shrugging my shoulders amusedly, smiling as I replied: "291, what *does* it mean?" Letters too had come from Europe, quite a few, asking me that same question, "What is it, this '291' that people are talking about?"... it flashed upon me to ask myself, "What is '291'?" I would like to know. How find out? Why not let the people tell me what it is to them. And in telling me, perhaps they will tell each other. Some say 'tis I. *I know it is not I.* What is it?<sup>47</sup>

Alfred Stieglitz was, of course, named among the Forum committee. Coady condemns the excesses which he, and a number of contemporary critics, saw in this very conscious experimentation, or at the very least again mocks theoretical descriptions of art works as pretentious. By setting out the figures with a decimal point in '2.91' Coady points out how inextricable is the idea of money from an exhibition where 'in five months' time those pictures will be worth twice what is asked for them today'.<sup>48</sup> Dennis Raverty's *Struggle Over the Modern* draws attention to the fact that the Forum exhibition, in an almost text-book illustration of Bourdieu's idea of the inverted economy of art, used the lack of commercial motivation for the painters as an inverted marketing point: as their 'purity' of motive was unimpeachable, they were a safe investment.<sup>49</sup> William Agee, too, has recounted the glee with which the brothers Stanton and Willard Wright anticipated (but did not realise) enormous sales from their prominent positions in the Forum exhibition, in contrast to the 'non-commercial' protestations of the catalogue.<sup>50</sup> Part of a letter from Stanton Wright to Morgan Russell, fellow synchromist and exhibitor, reads as follows:

My Dear Russell –

Here goes to invite you to a big show which will be pulled off here the first of March and which will for once and all establish you as a selling factor in this country. Willard is getting it up in conjunction with Kennerley, the president of the Anderson Galleries (the biggest selling gallery in the world, and by the way, the most sumptuous ....) and also owner of the one 'highbrow' magazine (the Forum) of America on which Willard is art critic. These galleries when they lend their name to a show are as good as cash ... and **we**, you and I, because of our reputation will sell every thing. Of course we will hang ourselves in the best space there! After

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<sup>47</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, *Camera Work* No. 47 (dated July 1914, published January 1915), p.1.

<sup>48</sup> I have been unable to identify this quotation, which seems not to be in the *Forum* text, but is certainly in the spirit of Wright's introduction.

<sup>49</sup> Dennis Raverty, *Struggle Over The Modern*, pp. 35-45.

<sup>50</sup> William Agee, 'Willard Huntington Wright and the Synchromists: Notes on the Forum Exhibition', *Archives of American Art Journal*, 24.2 (1984), pp.10-15.

New York it will travel about all the big cities to the coast and I expect to take at least \$1500 out of it.

...

There is sure sales to be made so if you want money don't fail to hurry it up.<sup>51</sup>

Two further points are worth mentioning which add to the understanding of this page in *The Soil* that has, until now, largely been regarded as non-specific proto-dada satire. The first point is that by referring to Wright's picture and its caption, Coady sets himself at odds not, at that point, with the art (though in his review of the 'Independents' later that year, discussed below, he directs antipathy towards the experimental) but with the language and the sentiments with which it was associated and, indeed, marketed. The second point is that besides the quarrel he had with the *Forum* exhibition committee, there was already a known rift between Coady and artists in the "291" group, a fact that becomes apparent from the text of the letters of Mabel Dodge to Gertrude Stein. The '2.91' reference is clearly relevant here as well. Dodge recognised her own influence as a tastemaker and was acquainted with most of the New York intelligentsia and self-consciously styled Bohemians. Advising Stein against publishing with Donald Evans, whom she regarded as unsuitable, Dodge wrote 'Now that quiet little Cody man, who hates Stieglitz & "291" & has allied himself with Max Weber against him & everyone connected with him, would be a better one to publish with & have them sold at his little gallery, where he's already selling "Three Lives"'. 'If [Robert] Co[a]dy would publish [Tender Buttons] & sell at his gallery it would be far better but I can't do anything there as I have no influence on account of my friendship for, & allegiance to, "291" which he hates.'<sup>52</sup>

Although her description of Coady as 'that quiet little man' is amusingly different from that of Munson's 'belligerent' quasi-tout, it is not clear from Dodge's letters whether she knew the reasons that lay behind this factionalism. But that there was already at least some economic rivalry between "291" and Coady's Washington Square Gallery also emerges from letters between Marius De Zayas and Alfred

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<sup>51</sup> Letter from Stanton Macdonald-Wright to Morgan Russell, early 1916. Morgan Russell Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reproduced in Agee, 'Willard Huntington Wright and the Synchronists' as above, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> Letters from Mabel Dodge to Gertrude Stein, published in *A History of Having a Great Many Times Not Continued to be Friends: The Correspondence Between Mabel Dodge and Gertrude Stein, 1911-1934* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1996), pp. 220, 223.

Stieglitz in 1914. From the slightly peevish tone of the exchange below it seems that Stieglitz disapproved of a ‘commercial’ gallery and De Zayas, at that time, also expressed concern. De Zayas wrote:

I saw Kahnweiler and ask him about the Picasso exhibition. He said he was very sorry not to be able to be of any service to you, because he has a contract with Brener [*sic*] who has open a galerie in Washington Sq., N.Y., that he has to be his sole agent. That Brener Galerie from what I can see is going to be a danger to modern art in America. Kahnweiler also is taking a decided attitude of commercialism and pure commercialism.<sup>53</sup>

Stieglitz responded:

I am not at all surprised at what you wrote me. As a matter of fact I expected nothing else. I had heard that Brenner and Cody [*sic*] ... had opened a little gallery in Washington Square. Brenner was to be in Paris and send things over. Cody was to stay in New York ... Washington Square is to be purely commercial, and as long as Kahnweiler has become purely so, the less we have to do with him the better.<sup>54</sup>

The letters refer to Brenner and Coady’s activities as sole agent for Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, whose artists’ contracts included exclusive rights to works by Picasso, Gris, Braque and Léger.<sup>55</sup> The trade rivalry is likely to have increased when Coady moved the Washington Square Gallery up to Fifth Avenue, in close proximity to both “291” and to the Modern Gallery at 500 Fifth Avenue. Given Stieglitz’s protests it is a little ironic that Picasso, the subject of Coady’s and Stieglitz’s disagreement, is noted by Robert Jensen as always having been aware of sales figures and of the distribution of his work.<sup>56</sup>

Coady’s jibes of satire against both “291” the gallery (indirectly, *291* the magazine) and the Forum exhibition and its committee thus have a basis not only in artistic principle but in commercial fact. The anomaly that Raverty exposes, that of the ‘marketability’ of art that has supposedly been produced on a non-commercial basis, exemplified by the way that the Forum catalogue exploited the very idea of the non-

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<sup>53</sup> Marius De Zayas, letter to Alfred Stieglitz, May 26 and 27, 1914, in Marius De Zayas, *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, ed. by Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 171.

<sup>54</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, letter to Marius De Zayas, June 9 1914, *ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>55</sup> Virginia Budny, ‘Gaston Lachaise’s American Venus: The Genesis and Evolution of Elevation’, *American Art Journal* 34 (2003-2004), 62-143.

<sup>56</sup> See Robert Jensen, ‘The Avant-Garde and the Trade in Art’, *Art Journal* 47.4 (Winter 1988), 360-367.

commercial to attract buyers, is what Coady also saw in the ethos of “291”. Bourdieu has called the idea of aesthetic disinterestedness a ‘social miracle’ and a ‘charismatic economy’.<sup>57</sup> If an artist exhibits a picture in a small private gallery it is invariably in the hope of its being sold. We have already seen, too, how Stieglitz’s view of the rarity of the limited edition, and his destruction of many copies of the magazine on the basis of price maintenance, built up symbolic capital and market value over time.<sup>58</sup> The business rift seems to have been exploited by Coady into a public show of disagreement on principle, working perhaps on the basis that any publicity is good publicity. It is also known that Weber and Stieglitz had themselves been, before and after Weber’s one-man show at “291” in 1911 (where Weber’s pictures did not sell well) in some considerable disagreement. It is also pertinent here that in his detailed biography of Stieglitz, Homer cites De Zayas and Picabia as showing the most antipathy to Weber, partly for his refusal to accept the worth of any painters apart from himself, Picasso, and Ingres. In fact, it seems that the antagonism continued between Stieglitz and Weber, not about art but about money: as Abraham Davidson recounts, the topic in an exchange of hostile letters between Stieglitz and Weber was ‘some business matter’.<sup>59</sup> Weber’s art at the time was undeniably modernist, influenced by the European artists and the very ‘isms’ which Coady felt were un-American and unrepresentative, though between 1917 and 1919 Weber appears to have been influenced by the ‘primitive’ in his cubist-inspired figure-paintings.<sup>60</sup> Yet he had been keen to expound the general interest in mathematics in *Camera Work* five years before, in an article entitled ‘The Fourth Dimension from a Plastic Point of View’.<sup>61</sup> He entitled a 1913 painting ‘Interior of the Fourth Dimension’ and his brilliant *Rush Hour, New York* (1915), though completely American in subject, also seems to be particularly influenced by Futurist principles.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 40 and 75.

<sup>58</sup> ““Symbolic Capital” is to be understood as economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a credit which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees “economic” profits.’ Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, p. 75, and see above Chapter 2, note 27.

<sup>59</sup> Abraham Davidson, *Early American Modernist Painting 1910-1935* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 30.

<sup>60</sup> Davidson, *Early American Modernist Painting*, p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> *Camera Work* 31 (July 1910), p. 25. The similarity in composition to the De Zayas/Meyer and the Carra discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 99 above) is notable.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33; ‘Interior of the Fourth Dimension’ reproduced in Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 130.



Max Weber, *Rush Hour, New York* (1915)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

There is, too, the question of the text of Coady's regular self-advertisement in *The Soil*. In an unpublished paper Michael North puts forward the view that this advertisement is ironically intended, and that, like several other aspects of *The Soil*, it is part of the sustained campaign against *The Forum* committee (which included Stieglitz) and its artists, and against the contradictions evident in Willard Wright's extensive catalogue notes. The advertisement is reproduced below:



There is some irony, of course, attached to the idea that one could guarantee the aesthetic quality of an object as well as its economic value. Also the 'market value' can of course be high or low, so Coady's permanent guarantee might read today as ironically tautological. But it seems likely that as an art dealer he was actually intent



on creating and maintaining a niche in what was then quite a fast-developing market for modern art in America, particularly in New York. Judith Zilczer has traced the rise in outlets to the 1913 Armory Show: ‘Between 1913 and 1918, thirty-four New York galleries, organizations, and private clubs sponsored approximately 250 exhibitions of American and European painting and sculpture regarded by the public as "modern" or "progressive."’<sup>63</sup> The attraction of Coady’s own gallery, declares this advertisement, is that its product is both well chosen and fit for its purpose – that purpose being both to provide ‘interior decoration’ and also to maintain its asset value in dollars. It perhaps demonstrates a public acceptance of a fact which is perhaps more readily accepted in the art world of today than it was then: that the value of art depends a great deal on who buys it. A fascinating aspect of *The Soil* and Coady’s attitude to art is this admission that the value of art is created not just by the work itself but the belief in its value – in this case the belief that Coady hoped would be the result of his advertising. As Bourdieu describes this: ‘not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artist, writer, etc.) but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work – critics, publishers, gallery directors and the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art as such’.<sup>64</sup>

Lending support to the ‘no-nonsense’ buying-and-selling theme, there is another idea on which Coady repeatedly insists in his *Soil* editorials, which is also evident in the advertisements for his earlier gallery in Washington Square, back in 1915:

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<sup>63</sup> Zilczer, “The World’s New Art Center”, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, p. 37.

**WASHINGTON SQUARE GALLERY  
46 WASHINGTON SQUARE, SOUTH**

NO ISMS OR ISMISM. NO  
METAPHYSICS OR PSYCHOL-  
OGY. NO GEOMETRY OR  
CHROMATICS. NO CHEM-  
ISTRY OR ANALYSIS. NO  
ARCHAEOLOGY OR ETH-  
NOLOGY. NO MODERNISM  
OR ANTIQUARIANISM. NO  
HERBARIUMISM OR PHIL-  
ATELY. NO CALISTHENICS  
OR EXPERIMENTS. NO  
SENSATIONS OR ODDITIES.  
NO FOURTH OR FIFTH  
DIMENSIONS. NO PIGMENT  
OR LABELS. NO MODES OR  
FASHIONS. NO PATRIOTISM  
OR PHILANTHROPY. NO  
HEROISM OR SUFFERING.

**WORKS OF ART  
AND REPRODUCTIONS<sup>65</sup>**

Nothing fancy, then, just plain straightforward pictures for your wall or sculptures for your hall with no aesthetic or artistic pretensions attached. So while Bohan, putting *The Soil* into a context in which modernism in American art and literature is directly attributable to the innovations of Whitman, describes *The Soil* as being driven by ‘the logic of the *flâneur*’ it might equally well be described as being driven by the logic of the entrepreneur.<sup>66</sup> In addition Bohan marks out the contrast between the attitudes of the two gallery owners Stieglitz and Coady, which indicates a great deal about the difference between them, but also, inadvertently, about the way that a discourse of trading and commerce is casually associated, in everyday vocabulary, with the pleasant and above all with the ‘normal’:

In contrast [to Stieglitz’s gallery], Coady’s gallery, like his journal, actively cultivated the easy give-and-take of the street. Culture and commerce were conjoined in a space where old

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<sup>65</sup> Advertisement, Guido Bruno’s *Greenwich Village* (5 February 1915). It is perhaps significant that, also included in the issue of Guido Bruno’s *Greenwich Village* where this advertisement appears, was the same article from Vollard’s *Cézanne’s Studio* which appeared in *The Soil* for March 1917.

<sup>66</sup> Bohan, *Looking into Walt Whitman*, p. 173.

and new art enjoyed an easy coexistence and where reproductions were for sale alongside original works of art.<sup>67</sup>

The idea of *easy* 'give-and-take' here (any private gallery is clearly buy-and-sell, rather than give-and-take, as indeed is the high street activity which her phrase recalls) is profoundly interesting. Bohan here not only alters the meaning of 'give-and-take' but somehow assumes that these activities are 'easy' in comparison with Stieglitz's 'uneasy' founding principles of non-commercial exhibition. Pound's statement that we saw earlier, too, 'there are some brains in the concern', correspondingly equates business acumen with intellect.

From all of the above, however, we can immediately see that far from being easy, the aesthetic and commercial position of *The Soil* is as ambivalent as any other. There is clearly an implicit approval of the American capitalist system in Coady's glorification of factories and large machinery, and an explicit approval of commercial sales techniques in the publication, for instance, in the first issue of *The Soil*, a picture of a shop window accompanied by an article by a window dresser about his art. Yet it is undeniably a uniquely explicit position among the group of American small magazines produced in its particular time. In the obituary in *Broom*, Robert Sanborn acknowledged this: 'Out of the competitive struggle directed by a centralized capitalism, which is one of the principal contributions made by America to economic history, there have emerged an amazing variety of mechanical forms' he wrote. He continued 'because Bob Coady is dead there is nothing to be hoped for of just the unique spirit that made *The Soil* so brilliantly provocative of new art forms and of controversial opinions about them'.<sup>68</sup> This looks like splendid praise but it is ambiguous. Was Coady 'provocative' of the art-buying public or was he 'provocative' in his condemnation of the experimental? Coady appears to have valued controversy and argument, but with opinions which were not necessarily progressive. 'His mind', continues Sanborn, 'was too well balanced for him to indulge in excessive judgments, he did not credit the work of the cartoonists, sports-writers, and athletes, with the achievement of any permanent value.' Sanborn, despite his poetic sports writing, disapproves of the 'excess' implied in the exaltation of popular commercial culture,

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<sup>67</sup> Bohan, *ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Alden Sanborn, 'A Champion in the Wilderness', *Broom* 3.3 (October 1922), p. 175.

and does not elaborate on the nature of ‘permanent value’. And he does imply that Coady, in spite of all the satire, believed that there was a division between the permanency of artistic worth and the permanency of monetary value.<sup>69</sup> Given Sanborn’s perspective therefore we need to question any view of *The Soil* which suggests that it was produced with a desire to see the popular as equal in cultural value to the elite, or classical. In this alternative form, one which takes into account the market forces which affect gallery sales, Coady addresses the art/commerce dichotomy which was discerned and condemned in American society by *The Seven Arts* group, which was addressed in 291’s short paragraphs on art and economics, and which ultimately caused a rift between Stieglitz and De Zayas.

In *The Soil* for July 1917 Coady continues his competitive sally by printing an extended review of ‘The Indeeps’, the First Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists Exhibition which had recently shown at Lexington Avenue. This review condemns the Society for imitating European artists in their search for the new, and also continues to assume that American artists only produced work in an imitative shadow of Europe:

There is a half hidden pretence that the Society is international in scope. This helps the idea of bigness and liberality, but does the Society hope to compete with the Paris Independent, of which it is an imitation? Does it hope to bring forth unknowns from France, the art centre of the world? And if so, how?<sup>70</sup>

He continues to condemn the exhibition as ‘a large number of paintings and sculptures, the best of which were foreign, and the rest of which were a la foreign’.<sup>71</sup> But in support of Sanborn’s retrospective judgement, Coady offers in this review a definite opinion on the permanence of ‘the realm of taste’, and also of the realm of Art. ‘The whole scheme of the Society seems to be based upon a poo poo for “mere personal judgments,”’ he writes.

The appreciation and enjoyment of art always was and always will be a matter of “mere personal judgments.” Art calls them forth and they spring from a natural love of life.  
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<sup>69</sup> Sanborn, *ibid.*, 174, 177.

<sup>70</sup> From R. J. Coady, ‘The Indeeps’, *The Soil* 1.5 (July 1917), p. 202.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

There may be, within the realm of taste, an honest difference of opinion as to the degrees of value of a given work of art, but I don't believe that that difference can ever occur as to whether a given work is or is not art.<sup>72</sup>

Yet this appears directly contradictory to his position on the 'new unit' of American art which he recommends in the first two issues of *The Soil*. Was the 'new unit' somehow not to be in the same realm after all? If we allow Bourdieu's position then 'personal judgments' are uniquely formed from the various amounts of symbolic capital available to any one person in her or his cultural constitution, something which is in turn dependent on the structures of social and class hierarchies, and much less to do with any 'natural love of life.'

### *'Real' Taste and Market Position*

North's paper on *The Soil* and *The Forum* presents Coady as a mediator between 'modern art and the practical, perhaps even ... the commercial'. I would draw attention to the use of 'even' here: North's use of this qualifier suggests that there is still something slightly questionable about the promotion of the commercial.<sup>73</sup>

Coady's position is as problematic (not to say anomalous) as that of Wright's exhibition catalogue. Ignoring for the time being the idea that one cannot question what is, or what is not, art, in the excerpt above Coady writes of 'the realm of taste' and places 'value' within this realm, and he therefore means aesthetic and not commercial value. Though his magazine causes one to reflect on aesthetic values, he is here quite explicit about the distinction between different types of value.

Furthermore, although he begins with enthusiastic declarations of appreciation and support for all things modern and American, as indeed does *The Seven Arts* (the Whitman influence underpins both, in style and content) his supporting aesthetic is undoubtedly European classical. Further, the praise lavished on machinery and shop windows and New York life and artistic swimmers and boxers in *The Soil* is almost invariably to do with visual qualities and not usefulness. Although different from that of *291*, Coady's is also not a Futurist position embracing dynamism, speed, and destruction. Unlike the 'experimental' position of *291*, it is an appreciation of

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>73</sup> North, 'Art Value and Market Value Both Guaranteed', p. 8.

classical curves and lines of beauty, sometimes of a machine's resemblance to painting: 'If the mind-moulder has not seen the modern locomotive he has not seen modern art. If he has not seen the steam shovel he has not seen Cézanne' proclaims a fragment, printed opposite a reproduction of a Brenner sculpture.<sup>74</sup> What he had offered to John Quinn, the lawyer and collector, for sale was a *photograph* of an engine (captioned in *The Soil* 'The largest engine in the world') which eventually appeared in the July issue. His offer had been declined, Quinn questioning with rather pedantic logic Coady's idea that this picture was art.<sup>75</sup> An article by an engineer, George Vos, compares the beauty of mathematics with the classical beauty of the figures of the Parthenon procession: 'Beauty', writes Vos, referring to engineering, 'consists of lines which can be followed by the eye with pleasure'.<sup>76</sup> Annette Kellermann, the 'artistic swimmer' writes '[T]he line formed by the body completes itself in the air and the body enters the water without a splash – then it is a finished performance ... The beauty of movement depends on the success of its muscular economy.'<sup>77</sup> The article is accompanied by a photograph of Kellermann in mid-curve, mid-dive, mid-air. Elsewhere, Coady writes of the need to allow the motion picture to develop without censorship: 'the aim of the motion picture is in the main one with that of the other arts, namely, an aesthetic aim' but while he feels that 'censorship would cripple these efforts' he does not accept that film can be a 'literary form'. 'A combination of a photo and a play, or a photo and a drama, does not make a motion picture – or any other unit.'<sup>78</sup> The article does not perhaps address censorship of the film industry as it then was, so much as the way Coady would have liked it to be. The beauty of film, however, is pronounced to be its filmic nature, art for art's sake, and he therefore firmly includes modern forms *inside* the framework of nineteenth-century aesthetic value judgements.

This persistence of the ideal of absolute beauty is an important contrast between *The Soil* and *291*. Agnes Meyer, in the same editorial in which she stresses the importance of the experimental, denied the appropriateness of any notion of 'objective beauty' to

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<sup>74</sup> Unattributed, *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), p. 86.

<sup>75</sup> Unpublished letter, Coady to Quinn, 21st March 1916, and Quinn's reply 25th March, John Quinn Papers, New York Public Library.

<sup>76</sup> George Vos, 'Art and Machinery', *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 16.

<sup>77</sup> Annette Kellermann, interviewed by 'J. B.', *The Soil* 1.3 (March 1917), p. 112.

<sup>78</sup> Coady, 'Censoring the Motion Picture', *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 37.

the modern age: ‘Likes and dislikes’ she writes, ‘are completely swept aside by the scientific critic ... modern psychology has made it impossible for him to believe in objective beauty in art.’<sup>79</sup> This is also one reason why it is problematic to link either magazine to the early appearance of the Dada movement in New York. The critical tendency to associate *The Soil* with this movement is at least partly due to the presence of the work of self-styled Dada legend Arthur Cravan in its pages. This is particularly prominent in the issue for April 1917 which contains a posed portrait and also an interview and a photograph of Cravan’s legendary boxing match with Jack Johnson, ex-world heavyweight champion at the time. ‘After Poe, Whitman, Emerson, he is the most glorious American’ says Cravan of Johnson, professing to like Johnson less for his boxing than for the fact that ‘[o]utside the ring he’s a man of scandal’.<sup>80</sup> Further contributions by or about Cravan include the aforementioned ‘Oscar Wilde is Alive!’, which incidentally contains the sentence ‘Ah! let me laugh, but truly laugh, like Jack Johnson!’<sup>81</sup> Cravan’s verse also appears in *The Soil*, notably a Whitman-inspired paean to New York: ‘The rhythm of the ocean cradles the transatlantics ... New York! New York! I should like to inhabit you! / I see there science married/ To industry, / In an audacious modernity’. This is set on a page underneath Whitman’s poem of fifty years earlier, ‘Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high’.<sup>82</sup> Cravan himself, born Fabian Lloyd, was brought up in Lausanne and lived for some years in Paris. Oscar Wilde had of course died in 1901, but Cravan was a distant relation, Wilde having been the husband of his father’s sister. Married to the poet Mina Loy, Cravan has since gained notoriety for public drunken exploits and for his ultimate disappearance, reputedly drowned off the coast of Mexico.<sup>83</sup> But it seems to have been the boxing and sports interests, not Cravan’s exploits in the world of art, which unite him with Coady. However, there is no Da-Da aesthetic, no debunking of the concept of art in itself, in *The Soil* but as we have seen,

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<sup>79</sup> Meyer, editorial, 291 No. 1 (March 1915).

<sup>80</sup> Attributed to Arthur Cravan, ‘Arthur Cravan vs. Jack Johnson’, *The Soil* 1.4 (April 1917), p. 162. There is little about the match, where according to other sources he was knocked out in the first round.

<sup>81</sup> Cravan, ‘Oscar Wilde is Alive!’ translated by Enrique Cross, *The Soil* 1.4 (April 1917), p.147.

<sup>82</sup> Whitman, excerpt from ‘Crossing Brooklyn Ferry’, Arthur Cravan, ‘New York’ *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 36. The verse is an excerpt from Cravan’s ‘Sifflet’, which had also already appeared in *Maintenant*.

<sup>83</sup> *Four Dada Suicides*, ed. by Roger Conover, Terry Hale & Paul Lenti (London: Atlas Press, 1995), however, offers anecdotal evidence of subsequent ‘sightings’ of Cravan, suggesting it to be just possible that he remade his personality as he had done so in the past.

almost the opposite view, inextricably suggesting the idea of art as almost universally applicable, and including the world of commerce.

Cravan and Sanborn were part of the group of artists surrounding Walter and Louise Arensberg, which group also occasionally included Wallace Stevens. Sanborn's comment on sports writers in Coady's obituary naturally leads to the conclusion that Sanborn's own sports writing in *The Soil* was intended as something other than simple reportage, and it succeeded. In January 1917, one such text reveals the skill as a poet for which Sanborn is better remembered:

Smoke – more smoke – thickening the air, staining the air blue-grey, rising on waves of breath, and falling, and filling the channels of breath, and reddening eyes.

Smoke – wreathing the rafters, lying in grey-blue folds over the sloping bank of men – they may be men over there, men's faces and bodies, slanting down to the parapet.

Smoke – fighting with the glare of the reflectors, fighting with the bald splendor of the canvas-padded ring, with the fleshy faces of the seconds, bare bodies, suspender buckles, white shirt-fronts, and the referee's gold watch-chain. Smoke, fighting and always losing. Smoke – stung with sudden victories of flame, tiny fireflies that spurt, wink, spread glowing orange over faces framed in writhing twists of blue-grey. – Smoke, fighting and losing.

Voices – striking down upon the ring, curving like blows around the rocking heads of the fighters, landing on my ears.<sup>84</sup>

Though it is written as prose, this passage clearly belongs within the best poetic tradition, its form and expression carefully matching its content, the atmosphere palpably and beautifully contentious. The alliteration ('fleshy faces' 'bare bodies' 'fireflies') adds an unforced rhythm, which anticipates the rhythm of the boxing spars when the fight begins. It displays, too, a beautifully-integrated organicism: the glowing cigarette ends become capricious insects and the voices take on an identity entirely separate from their perpetrators, striking and landing. The presence of these sports reports in *The Soil* has been noted by a number of critics, but very often in the context of emphasis on the magazine's homage to popular entertainment. Judging by Sanborn's comment and by his own untypical sports reporting, this was a successful

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<sup>84</sup> Robert Alden Sanborn, 'Fight Nights at the Armory', *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), p. 67.



demonstration of the fact that even lowbrow boxing reports could be transformed to highbrow poetry.<sup>85</sup>

In other published poetry *The Soil* undoubtedly fulfils its stated intention to display an essentially American modernism, combining as it does newness of form with modernity and urbanity of content. Maxwell Bodenheim, one of the most ubiquitously-published poets of that decade, contributes short New York vignettes – ‘Shop Girl’, ‘Chorus Girl’, and ‘Blind’. Other poetry in the magazine bears out both the magazine’s name and its claim to American-ness: Arthur Cravan’s ‘New York’ for instance.<sup>86</sup> Lastly, though, and only sparsely mentioned in critical studies of the poet Wallace Stevens, is his early poem ‘Primordia’. It begins with a beautifully sparse but animated picture of the Minnesota countryside:

#### **Primordia**

1. In the North West

All over Minnesota  
Cerise sopranos,  
Walking in the snow,  
Answer, humming,  
The male voice of the wind in the dry leaves  
Of the lake hollows.  
For one,  
The syllables of the gulls and of the crows  
And of the blue-bird  
Meet in the name  
of Jalmar Lillygreen.  
There is his motion  
In the flowing of black water.<sup>87</sup>

It is presumably no accident that this elegant poem can be read as a collection of the primitive organisms named in its title, growing in *The Soil* of America. Sanborn’s sports report vivifies and activates an urban scene while Stevens’ description unifies and humanises a rural timeless landscape. Incorporated into the landscape, too, is Jalmar Lillygreen, his name an Americanised version of the Scandinavian name

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<sup>85</sup> Sanborn continued to contribute similar reports under the same heading (‘Fight Nights at the Armory’) to *The Dial* until its cessation in 1929.

<sup>86</sup> Arthur Cravan, ‘New York’ *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 36.

<sup>87</sup> *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), p. 76.

widespread in that area, Hjalmar Lilligren. The short verse therefore contains not only the life-instilled landscape (in essence perhaps comparable to Auden's 1930 Italian landscape in 'In Praise of Limestone') but foregrounds American multinationalism in a rural setting, and as intrinsic to the soil of America. Coady's essentially neoplatonic view of 'beauty' as an absolute, we saw earlier, sets him apart from the experimental artistic modernists of the time, particularly the group represented in *291*, but *The Soil*'s poetry promotes a different view; it is 'modern' both in form and in content. Whether or not it is chosen for its unchanging beauty, all the poetry is presented, unlike much of *The Soil*'s material, without comparison, contrast, or ironic comment.

On the whole, though, Coady maintains a complex and decidedly untenable intellectual position: a number of the products of commerce, because they are new and American, are Art, whereas at the same time Americans who produce Art by conventional methods such as painting are merely imitating European ideas. 'With art in abundance and our arteries young, why should we nibble on a dead end of Europe?' he asks, in the same *Independents* review where, as we saw above, he denied that there could be any mistake about art and non-art.<sup>88</sup> This position, is surely at odds with that declared in the first issue, that America's products would 'add a new unit to art'. It is also clearly opposed to the ideas in *291*, which explicitly wished to incorporate modern European ideas into American art. And it is not, ultimately, only American modern painting which Coady holds up to ridicule in this review but the art of such considerable European talents as Constantin Brancusi ('theoretical substitutes and deceptions and fitted into bevy pretences and fraternal conceits') and Robert Delaunay ('we are at a loss to know whether he is timid, or greedy, or both. It is a middle talent he has'). Of the French painter Metzinger he decides 'Metzinger has some taste, but it is hindered by a struggle to be new'. The American Marsden Hartley is 'defeated' by 'his efforts to be something he is not' and the work of John Marin (an American and a "291" aficionado) 'is indicative, I think, of a weak-kneed conviction.'<sup>89</sup> In other words, any attempt at newness or experimentalism in art, from either Europeans or Americans, is doomed to failure. Even Walkowitz is condemned: 'To build up between and sustain these common contrasts of light and dark and big

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>89</sup> R. J. Coady, 'The Indeps', *The Soil* 1.5 (July 1917), pp. 206, 207, 208.

and little and make art out of their vulgarity, would take all the strength of a gigantic genius.’ This shows a conservative dislike of ‘vulgarity’ which was so prized by James Oppenheim (see page 57), though the implied meaning is rather different. There are some exceptions to this general rule of denigration, of which two are Michael Brenner and Max Weber. Brenner worked as a sculptor rather than as a painter or graphic artist, and his two small and comparatively insignificant drawings, submitted late to the exhibition, receive what seems a disproportionate amount of approving attention, as though Coady were giving his commercial associate a sales boost.<sup>90</sup> ‘These drawings are good rather than “new”’; and in fact there is an oldness about them which reminds one of the antique and gives them a value of future permanency’, he writes, furthering the idea of innate beauty and also the ‘value’ inherent as symbolic capital.<sup>91</sup> Max Weber’s entry, too, he unequivocally pronounces ‘probably the most successful picture in the exhibition.’<sup>92</sup> We recall that Weber and Coady were allied in opposition to the Stieglitz group. The only other two artists in the Independents show of whose work Coady approves are Picasso and Braque, and one recalls here that these were also artists signed to Kahnweiler’s agency. The review therefore appears, consistently, to support Coady’s own business interests.

From the foregoing it can be seen that it is easy to disparage Coady’s art-critical ability at the level of simple logic, as does Tashjian. But in spite of Coady’s condemnation of ‘the struggle to be new’, the magazine is still intent on the creation and definition of the new in art, and raises in its own way issues which are entirely central to present-day debates on high art, low art, the definition of the avant-garde, the definition of the modern, and the intricate association of art with commerce. It also finds newness in what might be called the semi-traditional, such as the simplicity of a Japanese or South American popular, traditionally-based dance tune. The page is reproduced in Figure 9, p. 155, for comparison with the Savinio piece reproduced in chapter 2. Coady’s brief comment on the piece states the following:

Here is a piece which criticises our accepted notions of rhythm. Devoid of rhythmical excursions for the sake of variety, of rhythmical voids for the sake of harmonical speculation,

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<sup>90</sup> Details of entries to the Independents exhibition from Clark Marlor, *The Society of Independent Artists: Exhibition Record 1917-1944* (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, c.1984). Brenner’s entry for 1917 lists his address as 489 Fifth Avenue.

<sup>91</sup> R. J. Coady, ‘The Indeps’, *The Soil* 1.5 (July 1917), p. 205.

<sup>92</sup> R. J. Coady, *ibid.*, p. 208.

without catering to notes, the idea it starts – it undeviatingly hammers upon to the end, vigorously objective.<sup>93</sup>

This reads almost like a paraphrase of the Imagist ‘direct treatment of the “thing”’ so important to Ezra Pound.<sup>94</sup> And while Coady regrets the lack of printed ‘harmonization’ the presentation of the single, unadorned musical theme actually further supports this view of the modern.<sup>95</sup> In *The Soil* 2, where the melody of a Mexican dance, recalling the Kappore in its simplicity, is reproduced without comment, a basic left hand harmony is reproduced.<sup>96</sup> Coady lauds simplicity of form in popular commercialised folk dance music; in 291 De Zayas praises the complexity of the art of Savinio. Visually, aurally, and conceptually, the musical contrast is striking.

So while Coady praises the ‘objective’ in music, he objects to corresponding attempts to attain objectivity in art, that ‘pure objectivity’ which De Zayas prized and praised in Stieglitz’s photographs. In a discussion of the magazine *Camera Work*, Hélène Aji has generalised this as ‘the joint search for objectivity of form and the abstract line in the precision of industrial forms.’<sup>97</sup> While Coady praises industrial forms, it is for their American symbolism and for their classical beauty of line. Though the photographic reproductions in *The Soil* may be good, it is not the art of the machine photography that interests Coady, but the relation of the picture to the advanced society that the machine represents, that which Williams called ‘the ability to live well’. The photograph of New York, copyrighted to the long-established bank Brown Brothers, is included because it represents an urban reality, and it is contrasted on the double page with one of Abraham Walkowitz’s ‘New York’ compositions from the catalogue of the Forum exhibition. ‘Who will paint New York? Who?’ cries a caption

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<sup>93</sup> *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), p. 50.

<sup>94</sup> From Pound, ‘A Retrospect’ (1919), reproduced in Kolocotroni, Goldman, Taxidou, *Modernism: An Anthology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 374.

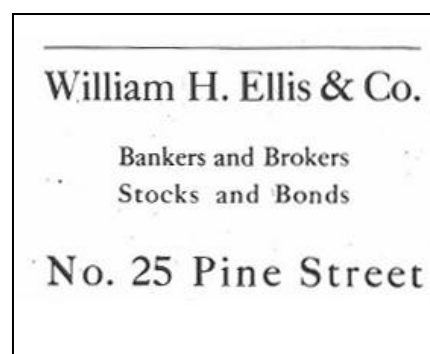
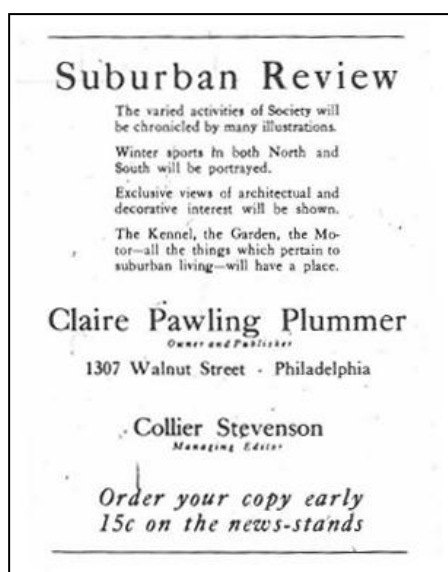
<sup>95</sup> A recording of a similar Kappore, originally made in 1909, has no additional harmony or accompaniment, but is sung *a capella* and in unison. (*Wax Cylinder Recordings of Japanese Music* 1901-1913, Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv Historical Sound Documents, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2003).

<sup>96</sup> ‘Preteneras’, *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), pp. 74-75.

<sup>97</sup> Hélène Aji, ‘Camera Work: Montage Moderniste’ in *Revues Modernistes Anglo-Américaines: Lieux d’Échanges Lieux D’Exil* (Paris: Ent’revues, 2006), p. 253.

on another page of *The Soil*.<sup>98</sup> But while Coady presents this directness as his preference, he also prints Gertrude Stein's abstruse, abstract, and decidedly indirect piece 'Mrs Th\_\_\_\_y' on the facing page. Again, it should be remembered here that he sold a de-luxe edition of *Three Lives* and had been in correspondence with Gertrude Stein in the hopes of also producing and selling *Letters and Parcels and Wool* in a limited edition.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, it appears, Pound was right: the overall combination of work included in Coady's *Soil*, though 'active in every conceivable field', is tempered with a definite eye for the interests of Coady's gallery, and for a readership whose interests included winter sports, stocks and bonds, and (in spite of *The Soil*'s urban admiration) general suburban living, as illustrated by the following advertisements in the final pages of *The Soil* number 2:<sup>100</sup>



But before we classify Coady as a lone mercenary (or even as someone who preferred 'easy give-and-take'?) we might recall Stieglitz's uneasiness at Brenner and Coady's

<sup>98</sup> *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916), pp. 36-37; caption on p. 15, underneath a short piece by Gertrude Stein.

<sup>99</sup> Letters, Coady and Brenner to Stein, April 27 1914 to May 30th 1916, Gertrude Stein collection, Beinecke Rare Books Archive, Yale University. Details of these and other transactions are footnoted in Molly Nesbit and Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, 'Concept of Nothing: New Notes by Marcel Duchamp and Walter Arensberg' in *The Duchamp Effect*, ed. by Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon (MIT Press, 1996), p. 157.

<sup>100</sup> Advertisements, *The Soil* 1.2 (January 1917), pages 54 and 55.

exclusive dealings with Kahnweiler, clear from the exchange of letters that we have seen. A question one might ask here is why, if Stieglitz were really commercially disinterested, Kahnweiler's choice of agency should be viewed by him so antagonistically. The subsequent business career of De Zayas and his promotion of The Modern Gallery in 291, that magazine's explicit preoccupation with the 'economics' of the art world, and its emphasis on its own 'limited edition' value, belie the disregard expressed in its pages for the financial dealings connected with that world.

An additional pertinent fact, in the context of this thesis, is that after the split between De Zayas and Stieglitz, De Zayas' Modern Gallery and the Coady Gallery were for a while in direct competition. If we are to judge by sales to John Quinn, one of the more important art buyers of this early period, De Zayas was far more commercially successful. During late 1916 and through 1917, for instance Quinn's records and receipts note a large number of transactions between Quinn and De Zayas and only a handful between Quinn and Coady.<sup>101</sup> Coady never denied that he was interested in the monetary value of art work, and also supported his own promotion of 'straightforward' dealing by publishing among his assortment a serialisation, not of an avant-garde novel or story written in a 'modern' style, but of work which was openly produced for money, a dime novel, *Nick Carter and the Lucky Clew*.<sup>102</sup> It is partly this which has added to *The Soil*'s reputation for populism, but taking its editorials, production environment, retrospectives, and readership into account, this reputation becomes less than justified.

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<sup>101</sup> John Quinn Memorial Collection, correspondence of Quinn with Coady and De Zayas, New York Public Library, box 2, folders 6-7. According to Naumann, however, though Quinn bought a great deal from De Zayas at the time, there were very few other clients. See *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, Naumann's commentary on the Modern Gallery, p. 94.

<sup>102</sup> 'Nick Carter and the Lucky Clew' is serialised (and never completed) over five issues of *The Soil*. The 'dime' novels were among the first mass-produced books intended at a price that the general population could afford, and the Nick Carter series (produced by a number of different authors) was extremely popular. Its defence in *The Soil* by Adam Hull Shirk, however, is oddly straight-laced, especially considering the protest against censorship which occupied the writers in *The Seven Arts*, *The Little Review*, *Others*, *Rogue*, and so on: 'there is nothing hectic, nothing degenerate, nothing decadent about them. They seek to implant no creeds, beyond honesty and decency', *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916) p. 40. The recognition that the existence of Nick Carter might have something to say about literary elitism had been more clearly expressed, in fact, by the American journalist Harrison Reeves in an edition of *Soirées De Paris* two years previously, which Coady may well have seen.

## *Conclusion*

Thus *The Soil* entered into the world of ‘commerce’ in every sense. First, in its marked dialogism, it was intrinsically grounded in its surrounding culture; I have shown here how it wrote back to a number of different and sometimes competing institutions: The Forum Exhibition Group, The Armory Show, “291” and *291*. The debate into which it entered appears to have touched the core issue of art versus commerce which was such an important critical topic at the time. Second, *The Soil* did not pretend to be anything other than commercially oriented (in the sense of making financial gain from gallery art sales) which led its editor into a contradiction regarding the short-term and long-term ‘value’ of art. Third, like both *The Seven Arts* and *291*, *The Soil* was interested in the commerce between the past and the present, and between Europe and America. But while *291* supported the incorporation of European ideals into American work, *The Soil* appears to have rejected modern European influences while praising American artefacts, buildings, shops, technology, infrastructure, and popular music, all under the banner of a New Unit of Art.

Chapter 2 of this thesis began with the remark that *291* and *The Soil* would be compared, not so much in the interest of proving their ‘grubbily mercantile interests’, but more to find out what such magazines say about the imbrication of finance into art, and how this relates to the idea of a pure modernist aesthetic. Like the work of Rainey, Dettmar, Morrisson, and Wexler, this does not detract from the work, but furthers an understanding of modernist work and its relationship to a commercial modernity. But, also like these authors, I question the persistent remnants of an art-for-art’s-sake view which assumes that an optimum analysis of a ‘magazine’ or ‘little magazine’ lies wholly or even primarily within the sphere of purely artistic or literary activity. These two magazines in fact exemplify aspects of the relationship between a symbolic economy and an economic one, the one leading in the long term to the other, a fact that seems, as already intimated, to have been well appreciated by Stieglitz. Bourdieu elaborates:

The art business, a trade in things that have no price, belongs to the class of practices in which the logic of the pre-capitalist economy lives on (as it does, in another sphere, in the economy

of exchanges between the generations). These practices, functioning as practical *negations*, can only work by pretending not to be doing what they are doing.<sup>103</sup>

The conclusion to this thesis draws further on Bourdieu's work in a discussion of the different positions of all the magazines addressed here. In *The Soil* it seems impossible to separate Coady's aesthetic from his commercial ambition and his own advertisements for art sales assumed that this was the case. Nevertheless in his critical reviews he would still attempt to place art in an independent 'realm' of good taste and good judgement, and his arguments for popular art remain logically separate from his arguments for aesthetic judgement, Coady's 'personal judgements' or in other words the idea of the 'pure gaze' with which Bourdieu takes issue. For now it is enough to remark that while Coady professed the 'value' of art to be inseparable from its fair price, for Stieglitz its value was inherent in its pricelessness.

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<sup>103</sup> Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, p. 74, from 'The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods'.



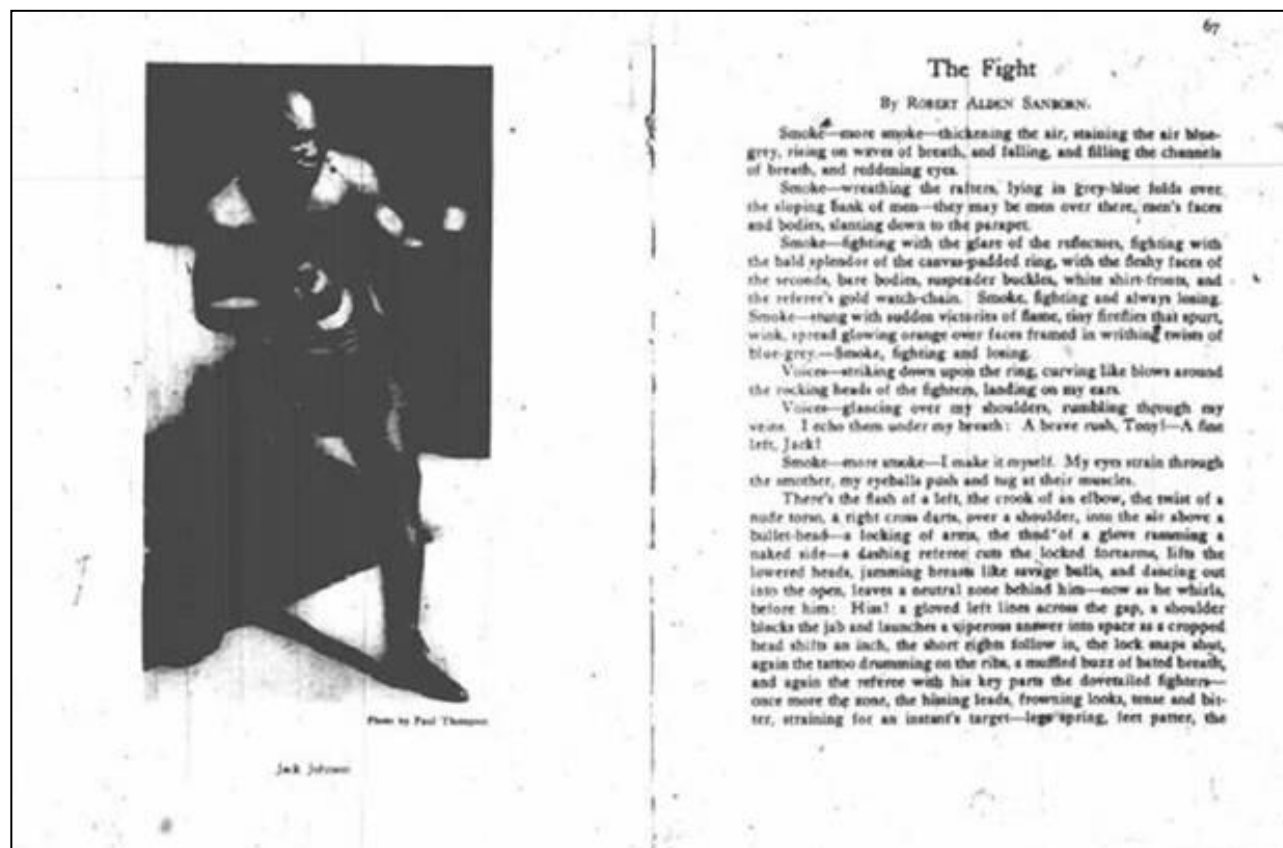
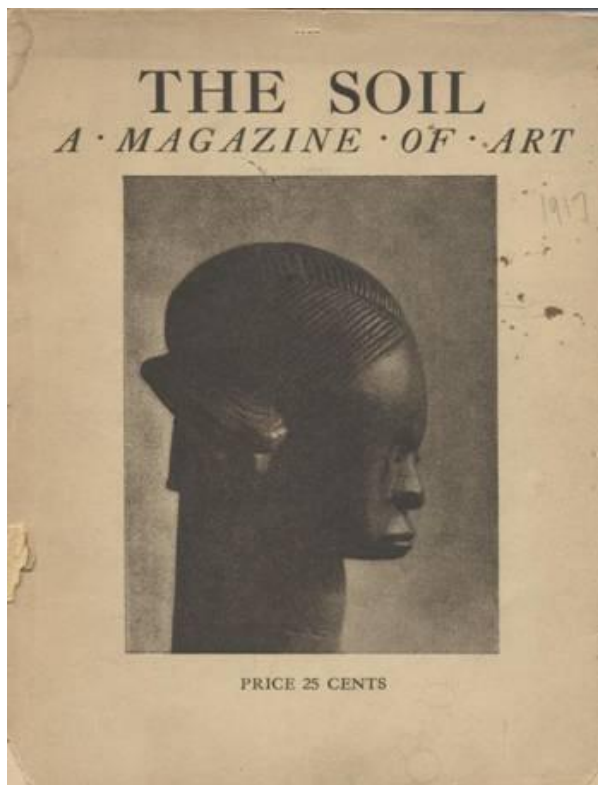
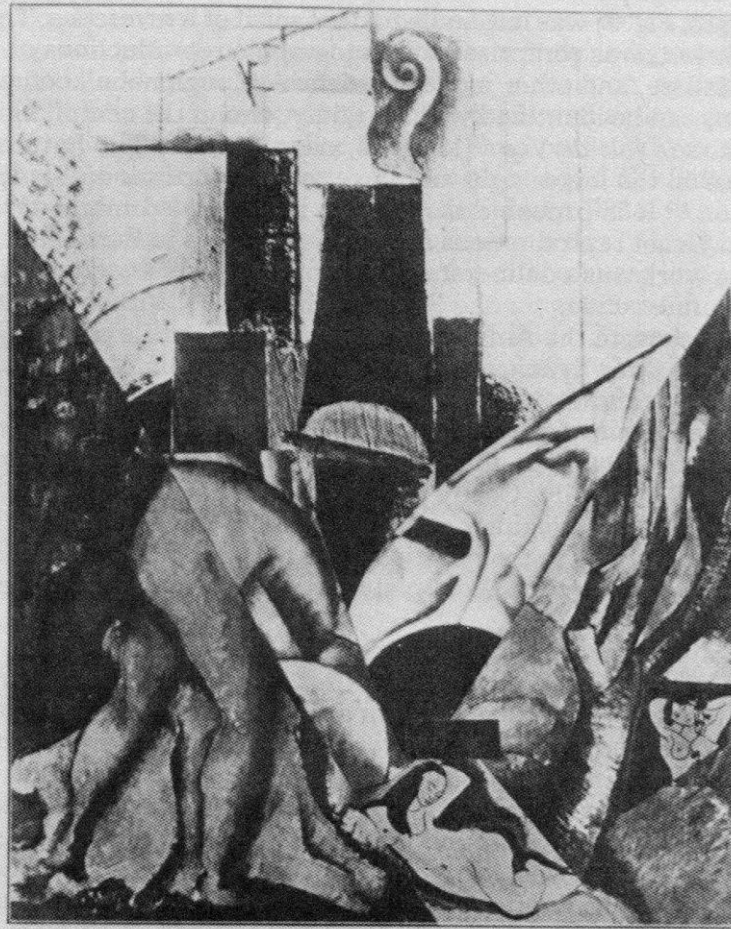


Figure 7: *The Soil*, sample cover and page spread



Cosmopsychographical Organization by R. J. Coady.

“COSMOPSYCHOGRAPHICAL Organization,” or, the “plastic” “visualization” of my “intellectualized sensations.” Wherein is “infinity struggling for birth in the womb of the soul,” “surrounded by swift moving nudes.” Wherein, also, “I pay no heed to mere objects” for, “the path moves towards direction” where I pay “homage” to “the absence of M. . . . D. . . .” And, again, wherein, I have “invented” “nativity” and “organized” “organization” 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times. “Thus” do I “kill the feeble and invigorate the strong,” my “creative vision handling the whole surface with supple control.”

“What does 2.91 mean to you,” when “in five months’ time those pictures will be worth twice what is being asked for them to-day?” And, besides, “we guarantee these pictures”—“in so far as honest expert opinion can guarantee anything” although “it is obviously impossible to guarantee anything which does not, as yet, exist.”

Figure 7. Robert J. Coady. *Cosmopsychographical Organization*. 1916. Collage. Reproduced in *The Soil*, December 1916.

Figure 8: *The Soil*: ‘Cosmopsychographical Organization’

## Kappore

Here is a piece which criticises our accepted notions of rhythm. Devoid of rhythmical excursions for the sake of variety, of rhythmical voids for the sake of harmonical speculation, without catering to notes, the idea it starts—it undeviatingly hammers upon to the end, vigorously objective. It is a pity the harmonization of it does not exist in print.

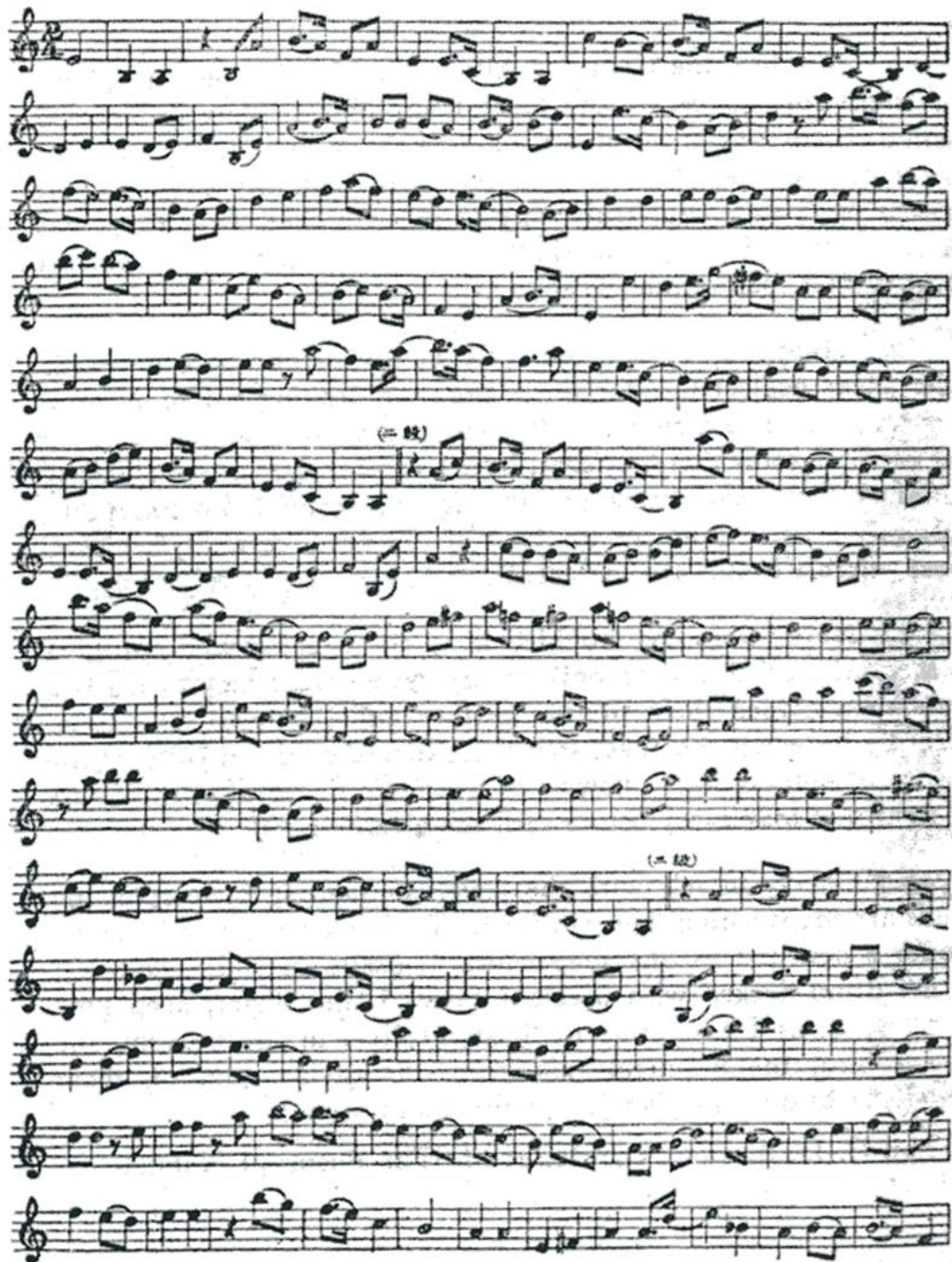


Figure 9: Kappore: *The Soil* 1.1 (December 1916).



## Chapter 4 *The Pagan*: ‘Just Like Socialists’

To be a true radical you’ll have to be born all over again  
The son of crushed disinherited poor-folk  
Working in a factory, or mine, or mill<sup>1</sup>

### *Introduction*

Central to this thesis is the theme of commerce; how do its operations affect or concern publication in the arts, and how is this reflected in small, supposedly ‘non-commercial’ publications? Is it possible to talk of ‘art’ that exists outside the commercial sphere? *The Pagan* was a determinedly high-principled and left-wing magazine which appears to have been produced on very little money, largely supported by its editor and having a very variable quality of print and paper.<sup>2</sup> It was, also, a promulgator of socialist and anarchist principles. Besides active ‘commerce’ in the form of an ongoing conversation and interaction with other publications, *The Pagan*, along with *The Masses* and *Mother Earth*, consistently addressed the idea that the working population is manipulated by national government and national capitalism for commercial gain, particularly in a time of war. The idea of ‘commerce’ defined as ‘an interchange of goods or commodities, esp. on a large scale ...; trade; business’ is therefore clearly included in the *Pagan*’s critique of the capitalist system. It discussed commerce directly, by promoting an anti-capitalist view of the booming American economy and its inevitable inequalities. It expressed direct solidarity with *Mother Earth* and *The Masses*, but appeared as an independent left-wing organ which also had as a primary aim the promulgation of art and literature of a high standard, some in a first publication. Like *The Soil* it objected to the idea of art which demonstrated a ‘struggle to be new’, but unlike *The Soil* it did not celebrate newness in the form of American industrial society, or attempt to extol the virtues of mass entertainment. Nevertheless it consistently commented on its surrounding culture. Like *The Seven Arts*, it was averse to the publication, by any medium, of low-quality

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Kling, ‘Flickering’, *The Pagan* 2.5 (September 1917), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> This adds to the difficulty of obtaining copies of *The Pagan* today, a fact noted on a web site offering 6 issues of *The Pagan* for \$200, <http://www.abaa.org/books/206684672.html>, accessed 17 November 2009, and another (The International League of Antiquarian Booksellers) offering three 1917 issues containing the work of Hart Crane, for \$450. [http://www.ilab.org/db/book1375\\_406377.html](http://www.ilab.org/db/book1375_406377.html) (accessed 17 November 2009).

intellectual material in a quest for mass sales, and it expressed this disapproval in its criticism of mass-circulation periodicals. Unlike *The Seven Arts*, however, it did not call for the rejuvenation of a specifically American intellectual idealism, being perhaps more cosmopolitan in its approach. Further, we will see later that it also addressed (at least by way of satire) the same dichotomy between art and commerce which so pre-occupied the writers and critics of *The Seven Arts*. Given that *The Masses* is a more well-known stridently left-wing magazine, it is illuminating as a point of comparison, and it is used as such in this discussion of *The Pagan*, which highlights a more indigenous socialist movement and offers some criticism of the approach to socialism of Max Eastman, the editor, exemplified in the passage at the beginning of this chapter. Further in regard to other periodicals, there is one definite theme in *The Pagan* which may well have had a bearing on its later acknowledgement or otherwise, and which is important, and under-addressed, in the general field of literary-historical research into the context of modernism that extends into this period: along with socialism and free speech, *The Pagan* explicitly supports Judaism. While it is neither a party-approved socialist organ nor an official journal of Judaism it highlights the significance of the Jewish presence in everyday commercial activity to the wealth of the American nation, the contributions of Jewish thought to literature, and the strong inter-relationship of Judaism and socialism, particularly significant in view of the social geography of Lower Manhattan where it was published.

In 1985, Gorham Munson looked back over years which he saw as an ‘American Resurgence’ in the realm of literary and artistic achievement. Of *The Pagan* and its bohemian *milieu*, Greenwich Village, he wrote: ‘There was another magazine that also had the village for its habitat and was as much *of* it as the *Masses*. This magazine has never received its due from the chroniclers of little-magazine history.’<sup>3</sup> It appears still to be the case that Munson’s two-page description of Joseph Kling, his magazine, its contributors, and his method of working, are the most sustained published characterisation of the editor of *The Pagan*, despite the fact that the early work of a substantial number of subsequently well-regarded authors and poets appeared in its pages. Among these were Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, the ubiquitous Maxwell

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<sup>3</sup> Munson, *The Awakening Twenties: A Memoir-History of a Literary Period* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), p. 75.

Bodenheim, Eugene O'Neill (in the form of 'E. O'Neil' as 'associate editor') and (as far as I know this has never been acknowledged in any relevant scholarship) Louis Zukofsky.<sup>4</sup> The slightly less well-known Paul Eldridge, Joseph Moncure March, and Edward J. O'Brien also appear.<sup>5</sup> *The Pagan* itself is cited only occasionally, usually in association with Hart Crane's early New York period. Nevertheless it seems to have been integral to the Greenwich Village scene, and from its first issue (1916) to its demise in 1922 it engaged in the inter-publication rivalry of the locality. Besides Bodenheim's first collection (*Minna and Myself*, 1919), The Pagan Publishing Company, cited as the magazine's publisher, also published two anthologies of *Pagan* poems, and one anthology of Orrick Johns' poetry (1920). Perhaps because of its limited readership, the magazine also seems to have escaped any kind of censorship during the time approaching and during American entry into World War I. While *The Masses* was suppressed from newsstands and *The Seven Arts* was forced to cease publication due to its anti-government views, *The Pagan* continued to publish anti-war and anti-government material, not only in the form of the intermittent commentary which amounted to editorial opinion, but also strongly thematised in poetry and fiction. This chapter serves then to add *The Pagan* and its editor to the field of modernist magazine criticism; it was unique, and deserves more critical attention than it has until now received. It has an odd reputation as an 'avant-garde' publication, which seems largely to be the result of Hoffman's brief comments in the 1946 bibliographical entry.<sup>6</sup>

Before considering the various different ways in which *The Pagan* addressed, and entered into, commerce, therefore, brief details are recovered here of its forgotten author and editor who, though not at all a well-known literary figure, nevertheless acted as mentor or sponsor to various subsequently respected authors and writers. This

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<sup>4</sup> Zukofsky's age in 1921, when the first poem was published, was 17; no sources that I have found appear to confirm that 'E. O'Neil' of *The Pagan* was Eugene O'Neill, but it seems likely, given his documented friendship with Crane at the time.

<sup>5</sup> Edward J. O'Brien's most well-known legacy is that of being the editor of the series *Best American Short Stories* of [each year from 1915 to 1941 inclusive] which included a number of selections from *The Pagan* during its publication lifetime. Joseph Moncure March was known as a poet and essayist, known in the 1920s for his work on *The New Yorker* and also for his long poem, *The Wild Party* (of which there was a notable re-issue, illustrated by Art Spiegelman, in 1999). March was also well-known as a screen writer.

<sup>6</sup> Frederick Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 249-250.

chapter will reopen, also, the topic of censorship which was raised in chapter 1 with regard to *The Seven Arts*. Though censorship was one of the prime targets for condemnation by the independent magazines of this era, its ever-present threat had various effects on their production and in some cases on their output – that is, commercial effects.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Editor of The Pagan*

Little seems to remain of Kling's work or his correspondence and there are few remaining copies of the magazine in spite of its six years of publication. But a full appreciation of *The Pagan* involves also a fuller appreciation of its idiosyncratic editor, given that the magazine contained so much of his work and opinions. Unlike *The Seven Arts*, 291, *The Little Review*, and a large number of others (see the Introduction to this thesis for more details) *The Pagan* has never been reprinted and has (partly as a result of this) not become prominent in any standard narratives of literary development, or in the 'Little Magazine' section of courses in English literature, cultural or historical studies. Unlike a number of contemporaneous magazines, *The Pagan* seems not to have been financed by wealthy patronage, and according to one biographer of Hart Crane, like *The Little Review*, it paid its contributors 'in nothing but psychological coin.'<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless it is instructive to revive Kling and his work here to help to elucidate the various ideological and social differences between Kling and the higher-profile editors of *The Seven Arts*, *The Soil*, 291, *The Masses*, and *The Little Review*. Given the way that *The Masses* intentionally employed commercial marketing techniques, and *The Pagan* on the whole did not, it might also be possible to draw some tentative conclusions about the possible effect of this fact on the relative positions in the modernist canon of different magazines.

For descriptions of Kling, one must rely on reminiscences such as that of Munson (who was employed in *The Pagan* bookshop), on one or two of Crane's letters, and on

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<sup>7</sup> The US Post Office is still empowered to refuse unilaterally to mail items which its authority deems indecent or treasonable.

<sup>8</sup> All the magazines in this thesis obtained an independent wealthy backer, including, indirectly, *The Soil*, which appears from Brenner's letters to have been part financed through a backer in Europe; Philip Horton, *Hart Crane: The Life of An American Poet* (New York: Viking Press, 1957), p.58.

other disparate references which will be cited over the following few pages.<sup>9</sup> There are also a number of Kling's self-published novels and poetry collections, and one semi-fictional collection of reminiscences written late in life, copies of all of which were subsequently donated by Joseph Kling to the New York Public Library.<sup>10</sup>

Munson offers an affectionate description of his editorial procedure:

Kling would open his shop in midmorning and pounce on his mail. Unlike most editors, he read manuscripts at once, sitting at his battered desk or standing beside it. It was a performance I can see and hear now, for Kling would read aloud passages he liked and would punctuate his editorial consideration with audible comments, gruntings, and chucklings.<sup>11</sup>

It was Munson's opinion, however, that Kling 'was not much of an editor' and that his literary technique was unremarkable in comparison to that of his young protégés.<sup>12</sup>

This cursory opinion fails to take into account a number of facts. First, the entire magazine was produced by Kling, and although he introduced many fledgling writers, he wrote a substantial amount of the contents himself under various pseudonyms, to which he draws attention in August 1917: 'G. J. Ilenko. Pen-name used by Joseph Kling. Other pen-names under which the author has written in *The Pagan* are: Ben S.; J.K.; S. J. Hope; Nichel; Eug. S. Pepi; G. Link.'<sup>13</sup> Second, Munson does not tell us that the magazine was begun well in advance of the site of the West 8th Street book shop, and that Kling had already sold books from the original address listed for *The Pagan* at 174 Centre Street, a list of which were advertised in his magazine. Third, Munson's judgement of Kling's inferiority as an editor fails to remark his considerable learning, his background, or his linguistic ability; Kling himself appears to have translated a fair proportion of the Russian, Yiddish, German, and French material which is to be found in his magazine. Fourth, one of the more interesting features of the magazine in terms of literary history is the inclusion of Zukofsky's poetry. Zukofsky came to critical attention in 1931 through editing a special edition of *Poetry* which marked the formation of the Objectivist movement.<sup>14</sup> He was also

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<sup>9</sup> Information taken from Gorham Munson, 'The Fledgling Years, 1916-1924', *The Sewanee Review* 40.1 (January-March 1932), pp. 24-54.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Kling, *Balance Sheet* (New York: 1961, publishing house not listed but probably Kling's own).

<sup>11</sup> Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, p. 77.

<sup>12</sup> Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Kling, *The Pagan* 2.3-4 (July-August 1917), p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Poetry*, special edition, 'Objectivists 1931' (February 1931). Also see <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/journal/article.html?id=183817>, the *Poetry* archive.



‘rediscovered’ in the American little magazines of the 1950s and early 60s as inspiration to, and friend of, the ‘Beat Generation’ - Ginsberg, Burroughs, Kerouac. Munson remarks that Kling had no time for the work of Williams or Pound, and that this demonstrates a lack of ‘modernity’. But while Munson notes the early publication of Crane’s poetry he does not mention that of Zukofsky. Further, neither of two recent accounts of Zukofsky’s early creative years mention *The Pagan*, placing the first publication of Zukofsky’s poems in *Morningside*, the magazine of a Columbia University poetry club, The Boar’s Head Society.<sup>15</sup> Zukofsky would have been a student at the time his poetry was published in *The Pagan* – he entered Columbia around the age of sixteen.

Besides Munson’s description, there are a number of other references. The Smithsonian archives contain a transcript of a 1981 interview with the American painter Joseph Solman, who died in 2008.<sup>16</sup> Solman worked for some time in Kling’s West 8th Street shop. Originally called The Pagan Bookshop, it had by then been renamed The International Book and Art Shop. In 1981 Solman had this to say:

The man who ran it is dead now, Joseph Kling. He was a crotchety character, but he knew his literature, he knew his poetry. He taught us E. E. Cummings and T.S. Eliot and many of the good writers. And he also kept a lot of prints in his shop and etchings. In fact, he was the one before I ever worked in his shop when I showed in an outdoor show, I think, in '31 or '32 ... when the week was over ... he gruffly told me to unpack them and show him the pictures and told me to lay aside a few ... And he bought a bunch and he showed them and he sold them. And thereafter, I'd come in. He sold many of those little gouaches for me. Then finally, he got myself and my wife to work. Well, before we were married, we worked in his shop and that's how we got married - he encouraged us to. And that was important because I think he was the first man who, as gruff as he was, crotchety as he was, saw my work, asked me the price, decided to handle them.<sup>17</sup>

Solman, thus supported, went on to a long and distinguished career as an artist and was at the forefront of “The Ten”, a movement which broke from the mainstream of American Art in 1935 and spawned abstract expressionists Rothko, Gottlieb, and

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<sup>15</sup> Tim Woods, ‘Zukofsky at Columbia’, *Jacket* 30, 2006, on line at <http://jacketmagazine.com/30/z-woods.html> (accessed 14 August 2009) and Mark Scroggins, *The Poem of a Life: A Biography of Louis Zukofsky* (Washington: Shoemaker Hoard, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Obituary by Charles Darwent in *The Independent* 26 April 2008, at <http://tinyurl.com/3pf8c9> (accessed on 14 May 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Information from the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian, Interview with Joseph Solman, 6th May 1981, reproduced on the Internet at <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/solman81.htm>, italics added.

Pollock.<sup>18</sup> Another artist, Ronald Brooks Kitaj (R B Kitaj) spent much of his life in England but was born, like Hart Crane, in Ohio, and lived for a time in New York. He remembered Kling in 1994, when he wrote, in a 'preface' to his picture 'Greenwich Village':

I first read Hart Crane in Greenwich Village, pressed into my hands by the Eighth-Street bookseller Joe Kling, whose remembered visage appears on the old gent at the lower right with handkerchief sticking out of his pocket. Joe, who deserves a book or picture to himself, was the first to publish the teenage Crane ... It was in the spirit of that other wide-eyed symbolist ode to New York ['The Bridge'] by another Ohio boy that I conceived this picture.<sup>19</sup>

The picture (figure 10, p. 200), must therefore serve as a rare, but enduring visual memory of Joe Kling. If Solman's recollection is correct, Kling must also at some time have read and appreciated what are now recognised as 'standard' modernist texts: those of E. E. Cummings and T. S. Eliot. While not *avant-garde*, therefore, Kling was perhaps more appreciative of modern work than Munson suggests.

Throughout its publication period *The Pagan* featured the work of many early-career artists. These included the extraordinary William Gropper, who later illustrated a number of left-wing publications including the *Liberator* and *The New Masses*, and also 'establishment' magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, *Pearson's*, and *The Nation*.<sup>20</sup> Other artists featured are Henry Glintenkamp, George Bellows, William Auerbach-Levy, and Robert Henri, tutor at the Art Students League and leader of the 'Ash-Can' school, who had headed the committee of the Forum exhibition so significant to *291* and *The Soil*.<sup>21</sup> The reminiscences of Solman and Kitaj suggest Kling as a significant influence, as mentor and dealer, to the development and canonisation of American

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<sup>18</sup> Details from Solman's obituary in *The Guardian* at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2008/may/05/1>, 5 May 2008 (accessed 18 May 2009).

<sup>19</sup> R. B. Kitaj, 'Little Imitations of My Life', *The Independent*, 12 June 1994. Image (of past pictures sold) available at [www.artnet.com](http://www.artnet.com) (accessed 24 October 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Gropper was a leading artist in the Jewish/Communist tradition: Frankel reports that he visited the Soviet Union in 1927 and 'on his return published a volume (in Yiddish) of 56 drawings he had made there.' He was active in the communist movement and a sympathiser with the oppressed throughout his life; in 1967 he stated '[I]f the Mexicans in Los Angeles were mistreated, I would feel Mexican. I react just as Negroes react, because I have felt the same thing as a Jew. Or my family has.' (Quoted in Jonathan Frankel and Dan Diner, *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 100.

<sup>21</sup> 'The Eight' were Stuart Davis, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan, but George Bellows and others were closely associated. See Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 14 and following.

twentieth-century art. He himself could also draw, and (in Solman's brief understatement) 'tried to write'. It appears from a rare memory of a cousin, Betsy Trace, an antiquarian book specialist, that Kling was 'born into a world of books, culture, literature and art'. Trace's obituary is instructive:

Betsy, born Elizabeth Kling ... was born into a world of books, culture, literature and art. Her father was a doctor in the Bronx; her mother, Bertha Kling, was a published Yiddish poet. Their home was always filled with Yiddish writers and artists. She grew up in an atmosphere that embraced and fostered a knowledge and love of books and art.

A cousin, Joe Kling, owned a bookshop in Greenwich Village. He was also a publisher and editor of little magazines. It was through this connection that Betsy became friends with Man Ray, R.B. (Ronnie) Kitaj, and so many other artists and poets.<sup>22</sup>

Another reference comes, surprisingly, from Frank McCourt in the *New York Times* for 1997. McCourt talks of meeting Joseph Kling's nephew, Yonkel Kling, and paying a visit to his uncle:

After our beer ... we made our way to Greenwich Street, where Yonk's uncle, Joe Kling, had his bookstore. Joe looked like a character out of an old newspaper movie: green eye shade, purple bands holding up his shirt-sleeves. He lived at the back of the store, where he had a metal cot, a toilet, a sink, a small refrigerator. Every Sunday, Joe traveled to Yonk's apartment on Montague Street for a bath and a Sunday dinner.<sup>23</sup>

Despite his having exerted what appears to be a solid influence on a number of American artists and writers, this later account appears to dispel any idea that Kling ultimately prospered commercially. Kling is thus known mainly by recollection, and never has had the 'book or picture' which Kitaj felt that he deserved. But his personality and his beliefs are recognisable in every issue of *The Pagan* despite its lack of formal editorials. These beliefs, which are set out below, constitute the magazine's ethos, and how they also involve the disapproval and condemnation of commercial motives while, perhaps inevitably, relying on standard operations of the commercial system.

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<sup>22</sup> Newsletter of the ILAB (International League of Antiquarian Booksellers), Winter 2007, published at <http://www.ilab.org/newsletter.php?newsletterid=2> (accessed 18 May 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Frank McCourt, an article in the *New York Times* arts section, 'From an Affair With Books to a Book Fair', *New York Times* (19 September 1997) section E, p.33.

## The Pagan, *censorship, prurience and the market*

Like the editors of the other magazines examined in this thesis, Kling speaks definitively against what he views as the conventional:

Dio Mio!  
What junk in the staid classic magazines;  
And what rubbish between gorgeous Burst-Slopolitan covers;  
And what pink perfumed mud in the Spicy-Story pots ...

While the “Masses,” the “Little Review,” the “Pagan,” – poor devils! ...<sup>24</sup>

‘Burst-Slopolitan’ clearly references *Cosmopolitan*, then a magazine of ‘popular’ and sanitised fiction, part of the wealthy and powerful Hearst newspaper empire. The florid, chocolate-box cover illustrations of the artist Harrison Fisher are typical, and with their predominance of the colour pink (though Kling’s reference is metaphorical as well as literal) no doubt exemplify the subject of his objections:



Fisher asserted that he drew ‘what the market demanded’, which for him at least seems to have meant, almost exclusively, these romanticised pictures of women. He

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph Kling (‘Nichel’), ‘Ecco La Vita’, *The Pagan* 1.1 (May 1916), p. 12. There is a co-incidental parallel between this description and the ‘perfumed parlour air’ of American gentility described by Dawidoff in relation to Santayana’s condemnation of the genteel tradition. See Chapter 1, note 37.

provided similar illustrations for the extremely genteel, 'staid classic magazine', *Ladies Home Journal*.<sup>25</sup> Kling's first issue, with the editorial comment above, aligns itself against 'what the market demanded' with the 'poor devils' of *The Masses* and *The Little Review*.

The centrality of the anti-censorship stance taken by most independent publications, particularly in the US, has been noted in previous chapters. Kling's next comment in the same editorial refers to the American Society for the Suppression of Vice, known by the name of its founder (recently succeeded by John Sumner): 'To the Comstock-gang: Fight fair; don't always think below the belt.'<sup>26</sup> This is a jocular, but pointed, reference to the wholesale censorship of anything that pertained to sex regardless of its literary content; the double meaning in 'don't always think below the belt' implies of course that the censors had themselves an over-prurient interest in their material. Censorship laws, as we have seen, featured strongly on the agenda of Theodore Dreiser, and also in the work of Sherwood Anderson, both contributors to *The Seven Arts*. Among minority magazines, *The Little Review* and its publication of *Ulysses* in serial form is the classic example of that era's American protest against censorship (albeit foregrounding a European author), culminating in its prosecution and trial by John Sumner. The most vociferous anti-Comstockian, and one who made the idea into a journalistic trade-mark, was Henry Mencken, for eight years co-editor of *The Smart Set*. This larger-circulation publication, however, monitored its own output carefully enough for marketability: Carl Dolmetsch's genial history of *The Smart Set* recounts Mencken and Nathan's rejection of Barry Benefield's short stories concerning prostitutes, for instance, as 'too frank', and Eliot's early poetry as 'too highbrow.'<sup>27</sup>

There are a number of examples of material in *The Pagan* which might have actively flouted the censorship laws had they come to the notice of Sumner's authority. A poem by Kling called 'Farewell' contains the following lines, for instance:

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<sup>25</sup> See [www.harrisonfisher.com](http://www.harrisonfisher.com) which provides a brief biography, and the Florida 'collectibles' newspaper *Antique Shoppe* (sic!) which provides some more details: <http://www.antiqueshoppefl.com/archives/cperry/fisher.htm>. (Both accessed 29 April 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Kling, *The Pagan* 1.1 (May 1916), p.12.

<sup>27</sup> Carl R. Dolmetsch, *The Smart Set: A History and Anthology* (New York: Dial Press, 1966), p. 79.

My soul craves  
 A nobler happiness  
 Than passionate kisses  
 And the feel of soft flesh  
 In my fingers ...

\* \*

Love is a lie ...  
 Any man-animal  
 Whose lips  
 Are at your throat,  
 Whose hands are eager  
 For your breasts  
 Will drivell with lying tongue  
 About endless love ...<sup>28</sup>

The poem is possibly misogynistic, but nevertheless ruefully condemns the hypocrisy and predatory tendency of the male, and appears to be self-addressed (indeed the 'I' of Kling's poetry, which is liberally distributed throughout all the issues of *The Pagan*, invariably appears to refer to the poet's actual self, rather than to a poetic persona). A further indication of what might, had any censor cared to examine it closely, have been viewed as Kling's prurience, is given by the considerable number and regularity of sketches, lithographs, and woodcuts of nude women printed throughout the entire life of the magazine. At least one appears in every issue: almost the equivalent of a highbrow page three girl, and they could feasibly be described as a marketing attraction. In contrast to the illustrations of artists like Fisher, however, these pictures were unsentimental, realist, and for the most part of extremely high artistic quality. The ones illustrated are the work of Robert Henri, Abraham Walkowitz, Ben Benn, Max Jaediker, Horace Brodzky, Hugo Gellert, John Sloan, and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Reproductions of nudes by August Rodin also appeared. It is unlikely that the similarity of each subject through several years of issues, and the frank sexuality of most of the pictures, is co-incidental (See Figure 11, p.201).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 'Farewell' by Joseph Kling, *The Pagan* 1.3 (July 1916), pp. 38-39.

<sup>29</sup> Variable quality of reproductions due to author's own sometimes inadequate photography. Drawings are attributed as follows, all listed in the contents simply as "drawing":  
 Robert Henri, *The Pagan* 1.3 (July 1916): frontispiece;  
 Abraham Walkowitz, *The Pagan* 2.3-4 (July-August 1917): frontispiece;  
 Ben Benn, *The Pagan* 3.2 (June 1918), p. 34;  
 Max Jaediker, *The Pagan* 3.8 (December 1918), cover design;  
 Horace Brodzky, *The Pagan* 3.8 (December 1918) — the subsequent issue of *The Pagan* includes Brodzky's extremely minimal, but recognizable, drawing of Ezra Pound;  
 Hugo Gellert, *The Pagan* 3.9 (January 1919), cover design;  
 John Sloan, *The Pagan* 1.12/2.1 (April-May 1917), p. 2.

Whether or not this was a sales technique, there exist several anecdotal references to Kling's own interest in young women, who are the subject of many of his poems and of his separately-published novels. Munson, for instance, recalls a rhyme about Kling written by Bobby Edwards of *The Quill* in 1919:

O, Pagan publisher  
Whom poet-maids prefer  
Into your little shop  
May many ladies stop.<sup>30</sup>

*The Pagan* published a steady stream of poetry by women, most of whom are now forgotten, though it is perhaps significant that two or three examples from the magazine appeared subsequently in a 1921 anthology of erotic poetry.<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Rexroth, writing in 1969, recalled these writers as part of a Greenwich Village scene which no longer existed, as 'all those wonderful girls who wrote poems about Italian truck drivers for Joe Kling's Pagan.'<sup>32</sup> A dedication by Moishe Nadir, the Yiddish writer, in the front of his 1921 work *Peh-el-Peh* (Face-to-face) translated and published by Kling in 1921, reads as follows:

To my dear Joe Kling  
for not having been born a Gwendolyn or  
Isabelle or Florissima or Caroline  
and thus sparing me the terrible annoyance  
of falling in love with him, I dedicate the first half of this  
book<sup>33</sup>

'Florissima' was, incidentally, the title of one of Nadir's poems, published in *The Pagan* in translation.<sup>34</sup> In summary, then, *The Pagan* made material economies and aligned itself against standard market practices and 'popular' magazines, but used a trademark nude in almost every issue, blurring the assumed distinction between art and commerce, and between socialism and capitalism.

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Unattributed, *The Pagan* 1.11 (March 1917), cover design.

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *The Pagan* 1.3 (Aug-Sept 1918), p.63. An interesting inclusion in view of the fact that Gaudier-Brzeska had been killed in action in 1915. No further detail of the source is given.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, p. 76.

<sup>31</sup> T. R. Smith, ed., *Poetica Erotica* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1921).

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Rexroth, 'Hail American Development', *New York Times Book Review*, 23 March 1969.

<sup>33</sup> *Peh- el-Peh and Improvisations* (New York: Pagan Publishing Co., 1920), dedication page. The copy of the book in the New York Public Library is labelled as donated by Joseph Kling in 1921.

<sup>34</sup> Nadir, 'Florissima', *The Pagan* 2.6-7 (Oct-Nov 1917), p. 36-37.

### *The Pagan, pacifism and capitalism*

*The Pagan*'s critique of capitalism is central: it also knowingly promotes a less cerebral form of socialism than does *The Seven Arts*, whose prime representative, Randolph Bourne, said of his own socialism 'I get in perfect despair over my revolutionary sentiments when I think of my perfectly humdrum conventional life, my irreproachably bourgeois connections, my lack of real knowledge of the workers, their thoughts, ambitions, and feelings'.<sup>35</sup> Coupled with *The Pagan*'s socialism is pacifism, which it sometimes attributes to the teaching of Tolstoy. It does however occasionally advocate revolution as a means of facilitating workers' control of the means of production. Ancient moral philosophy is acknowledged in the 'eudaemonists' of the subtitle and this in turn relates back to basic socialist economics, incorporating the idea that one person would in an ideal situation wish for that which was of the greatest benefit to the majority rather than the individual. Like *The Soil*, however, *The Pagan* was produced from a sales outlet. In most modernist magazines of the time there is a stated lack of interest in the sales process. However, as suggested, *The Seven Arts* is market 'branded' in its consistency of style and format; *The Masses* (as Morrisson shows) was market-oriented to current sales trends, *The Soil* aimed for and found an 'art market' niche, and *291* was future-market oriented.<sup>36</sup> But a dichotomy between the idealism of art and the reality of commerce was so central to the intellectual reasoning of the time that is verbalised and elucidated within all these magazines.

Other editorials, fiction, and poetry in *The Pagan*, however, draw attention to the pacifism that was a primary editorial concern. Few magazines of the arts that publicly denounced the war policies of the Wilson administration managed to survive very long after America declared its decision to join World War I in April, 1917. It quickly became very difficult, and was considered traitorous, to publish anything which objected to the American war decision in particular, or to war in general. *The Masses* and *The Seven Arts*, as shown above, were directly affected. Other magazines of the arts resolutely ignored the war: *The Little Review* for instance, in spite of its professed

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<sup>35</sup> Randolph Bourne, Letter to Alyse Gregory, 1 May 1914, quoted in John Adam Moreau, *Randolph Bourne: Legend and Reality* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1966), p. 43.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), Ch. 5.



anarchist sympathies, felt that it was irrelevant to artistic concerns.<sup>37</sup> Kling continued throughout the war to engage in a vigorous and intellectually consistent pacifism. The June 1916 issue of *The Pagan* printed the following:

‘What For?’

Only the rich and half-rich have anything to gain from wars of aggression. They are always on the lookout for new fields of exploitation. Their greed is insatiable.

They get the proletaire-mob to fight for them by befuddling their brains with patriotic, high-sounding, meaningless phrases, like “The nation’s honor is at stake,” “Our liberty is threatened,” “The flag, the flag!”

At a matter of fact [*sic*], however, the great majority of people have nothing to lose by being invaded and conquered.

....

What can the enemy take from them? Their measly bit of furniture and rags (called home), their slavery in factories? their toil-doomed families?

The invader seeks only the wealth of the rich; let the rich defend it. Let the fat purses pay for armies, navies, ammunition and all. Why should I feed my neighbor’s watchdog when I have nothing to protect? Shall I risk my life to defend one thief from another?

For the miserable, benighted, enslaved, disinherited Third Estate there is but one wise war: Revolution.

G. LINK.

The theme that war favours the wealthy recurs several times in *The Pagan*, for instance just before the time of Woodrow Wilson’s actual declaration:

A propos, I have read one of the most comically stupid, almost incredibly earnest – chaotic editorials ever written. It appeared in the “N.Y. Evening Mail” of February 9th. In it the author argues that the people of this country ought to be forced to fight, slay, destroy, even if they don’t want to, even if they see no reason why, even if they realize they have nothing to fight for, being only propertyless factory slaves, mill-workers, field-laborers, mine-burrowers, and the like .... actually advises that they be compelled to fight like the spear-driven helots of Greece, the lashed warrior slaves of Persia ....<sup>38</sup>

The anarchist-influenced view expressed in both these passages uses the economic argument: the uselessness of war to the poor and its advantage to the wealthy.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *The Little Review* for April, 1917, for instance, contains a blank page listed in the contents and entitled ‘The War’, with a small note at the bottom right reading ‘[we shall probably be suppressed for this]’. Margaret Anderson, *The Little Review* 3.1 (April 1917), p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> ‘We Three’, editorial, *The Pagan* 1.11 (March 1917), pp. 27-28 [ellipses in original].

<sup>39</sup> In 1934 in the American depression, Norman Thomas, conscientious objector, lifelong member of the Socialist Party of America, author of more than 60 works between 1917 and 1963, detailed the vast

Although 'revolution' is advocated, there is nothing to show that Kling was an active member of the American anarchist movement, though Emma Goldman and her magazine *Mother Earth* are frequently mentioned and supported in his magazine. There are one or two other, maybe purely personal, links with the movement.<sup>40</sup>

Most of Kling's pacifist war protest is against the exploitation of the propertyless masses by the controllers of the state's resources, and is thus very much concerned with that which can reasonably be regarded as commerce, on a national scale. The June 1916 issue of *The Pagan* also contains metaphorical satire at the expense of President Wilson's 'Preparedness' campaign, likening the idea of setting one national majority against another national majority, to sheep being asked to slaughter one another:

"My dear fellow-muttons, don't you believe in Preparedness?"  
Preparedness? Certainly.  
And they got busy.  
We're waiting for the slaughter.<sup>41</sup>

A month afterwards, *The Masses* issued a 'Preparedness Number' containing a number of articles detailing reasoned opposition to Wilson's idea.<sup>42</sup> Six months before, Emma Goldman had published a fervent anti-military article in *Mother Earth*, also issued as a pamphlet, entitled 'Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter.'<sup>43</sup> In September 1917, when patriotic hysteria in America was at its height, Kling issued a *Pagan* containing diverse anti-war material such as 'The Draft' by 'P. C.':

And they would have you fight, my gentle one.  
You, who took a kitten in, that huddled on our door-step, out of the rain  
...  
You, who love to nurse and make things grow,  
To men, and make, and build them,  
They would have you tear and wound and destroy ....  
Why, I would laugh  
If I were not keeping back my tears.<sup>44</sup>

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profits made in World War I by national industries such as lumber, mining, and petroleum. See Norman Thomas, *Human Exploitation in the United States* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1934).

<sup>40</sup> For example one of the poets featured in the December 1917 issue, Ernestine Hara, had married the anarchist journalist Van Kleeck Allison (whose work also appears in *Mother Earth*) in 1916.

<sup>41</sup> *The Pagan* 1.2 (June 1916), p. 46.

<sup>42</sup> *The Masses*, 'Preparedness Number', July 1916.

<sup>43</sup> Goldman, 'Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter', *Mother Earth* 10.10 (December 1915), also issued as a pamphlet.

<sup>44</sup> P. C., 'The Draft', *The Pagan* 2.5 (September 1917), p.12.

The ‘they’ of ‘they would have you fight’, depersonalised and distanced from the subject, appears as an adverse all-powerful authority and not a cause or a duty. This issue also contains a story called ‘The Coward’ by ‘Harry Adler’ whose American protagonist, a ‘Tolstoyan’, shoots himself rather than have to go out to shoot other people. A poem by Max Endicoff in the same issue, entitled ‘At Twilight’ describes a quiet moment between trees and breeze which is shattered by

... this long line of men,  
With snarling bayonets aimed at the sky,  
Never heed the voice of either.  
Stolidly  
They march, march, march –  
As if they were strange beings  
Coming from some alien land  
That knows of neither church nor soul.<sup>45</sup>

Endicoff’s description of an ‘alien land’ emphasises that an army is removed from nationality or political status.<sup>46</sup> The idea that alienation consists in belonging neither to organised religion nor to the realm of immortality (‘neither church nor soul’) and that inter-national enmity requires depersonalisation (like the ‘they’ of the first poem) is likely to have been influenced by Tolstoy, who wrote, similarly, of ‘stupefying men in order to make them fit instruments for murder’, recalling, indeed, Kling’s ‘sheep’.<sup>47</sup>

### The Pagan *and* The Masses

Besides the regular presence of Endicoff, and a number of artists in common, there is an ongoing commerce of ideas, and some disagreement, between *The Masses* and *The Pagan*. In the same September 1917 issue, Kling writes:

“Leaders must be men of great faith”, says Mother Eddy. This does not mean C. S. leaders only; radicals, too, must have faith. Even brilliant radicals. Otherwise they may be called pessimists, starveling-anarchists, and other unpleasant names.

Take Max Eastman, for example. He has faith. Wasn’t he sure in 1916 that Wilson would keep us out of war? That’s faith. He even told us all to vote for him.

<sup>45</sup> Max Endicoff, ‘At Twilight’, *The Pagan* 2.5 (September 1917), p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> Endicoff had been until recently a ‘business manager’ for *The Masses*; he had several poems published between 1915 and 1920, notably in *Poetry* for August 1915.

<sup>47</sup> Leo Tolstoy, ‘Thou Shalt Not Kill’, in *I Cannot Be Silent: Writings on Politics, Art and Religion By Leo Tolstoy* (Bristol Press, 1989) ed. Gareth Jones, p. 154.

But the beauty of being liberally gifted with faith is that one can recover so quickly from grievous disappointment and disillusionment.

We can imagine how Max must have been shocked when our dear President decided that the world must be made safe for democracy by condemning a million men to immediate idleness and slaughter training, and final agony in hellish trenches ...

Now I say to you, cher Max  
To be a true radical you'll have to be born all over again  
The son of crushed disinherited poor-folk  
Working in a factory, or mine, or mill<sup>48</sup>

Not only does this satire lampoon Mary Baker Eddy and the popular cult of Christian Science, and condemn Woodrow Wilson's famous address to congress announcing America's participation ('the world must be made safe for democracy') but goes on to criticise Max Eastman, erstwhile champion of pacifists, for being disingenuous. One month before, in the penultimate issue of *The Masses*, Eastman had quite hurriedly endorsed, in a supplement, President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' for a just and democratic peace.<sup>49</sup> In spite of this *The Masses* was suspended for anti-American activities and Eastman was later imprisoned for treason. Kling's position, as that of *The Masses* had previously been, was that pacifism is an inevitable and logical concomitant of a left-wing political outlook. But Kling's view explicitly implicates the capitalist economy and the related wealth-based American class system, suggesting that Eastman's radicalism cannot be genuinely maintained given the relative prosperity into which he was born; we are reminded again of Randolph Bourne's misgivings about his own brand of bourgeois socialism.<sup>50</sup>

As a comparable example, *The Seven Arts*, though as already noted it makes strong political anti-war statements, does not contain any overtly pacifist creative writing, although there is an allegorical 'play' by James Oppenheim which has 'the President' arguing with his conscience over whether the declaration of war should have been a democratic decision. Yet where *The Seven Arts*, being heavily dependent on sponsorship funds, and authored by a more prominent group of writers, ceased

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<sup>48</sup> Joseph Kling, 'Flickering', *The Pagan* 2.5 (September 1917), p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> Max Eastman, 'President Wilson's Letter To the Pope' supplement to *The Masses*, October 1917: opposite 22; also see William O'Neill, *The Last Romantic: A Life of Max Eastman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): 65. In spite of this belated support of Wilson, Eastman was soon afterwards indicted under the Espionage Act, alarming a number of his Socialist supporters.

<sup>50</sup> Eastman was the son of two ministers of the Congregational Church. See Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of The Masses, 1911-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1982).

publication, *The Pagan* continued a pacifist message throughout the war period. There is no documentation currently available which would help to ascertain whether *The Pagan*'s lack of persecution by the censors was merely because its circulation was too small for it to be considered economically or morally significant either as a corrupting influence or anti-American publication. An 'advertising manager' does report, in one issue on his attempt to sell advertising space:

I do not know what darkened minds and evil hearts may dwell with the otherwise genial business-men, but they all gloomed on "The Pagan," though I assured them its circulation was up in the thousands, and gave them an awfully good line of talk.<sup>51</sup>

This vague circulation figure 'in the thousands' is clearly ironic. So while *The Masses* wavered towards support of government policy, *The Pagan* continued valiantly to oppose it. Whether suppression would have increased its notoriety and perhaps its later notability, along with *The Little Review* and *The Masses*, can only be a matter for conjecture.

### *Paganism, Eudaemonism, and Capitalism*

'Hang your lantern in yon nook,/Drink and laugh at priest and Shah' was the motto published on the contents page of each issue, which implies jocoseness, satire, and general bonhomie. The lines are taken from 'Hafiz' Song of the Saint' which appeared in *Oriental Poetry* by William Alger, published in 1874.<sup>52</sup> In Munson's view *The Pagan*'s motto was 'more hedonistic than eudaemonistic.'<sup>53</sup> In fact the magazine, taken as a whole, does not entirely fit either description. A standard dictionary of philosophy defines 'Aristotelian' Eudaemonism:

Ethics and politics are closely connected: it is worthwhile for individual man to attain his own happiness, but nobler and more divine to attain it for the commonwealth ... Tension may exist between individual and social ethics, but the goal of both is happiness.

Aristotelian 'eudaemonism' is not far removed from Socrates' opening thesis in the second book of the *Republic*: the true good is desirable for its own sake, *because* it makes the individual happy. The objective good and the subjective good coincide.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> 'I.L.', An 'advertising manager', *The Pagan* 1.9 (January 1917) p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> William R. Alger, *Poetry of the Orient* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1874), p. 215.

<sup>53</sup> Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, p. 75.

<sup>54</sup> Karsten Friis Johansen, trans. by Henrik Rosenmeier, *A History of Ancient Philosophy: From the Beginnings to Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 367.

Besides the expression of pacifism, a belief in the idea of a 'true good' or self-evident, non-subjective ethical value appears to be what drove Kling's ethical and political statements. His articles and his many staccato personal statements bear out the idea that the true happiness of all means the happiness of the individual; not the happiness of hedonistic carousal, nor the marching of the poor to war by order of the rich, but the tangible benefits of socialism.

The magazine voiced a deep-seated collective moral conscience, also relating to the inconsistencies of capitalism. It exposed the hypocrisy and heedless hedonism of some of the pseudo-radical socialising among the well-to-do intelligentsia of the area. Kling is caustic, for example, about the many fundraising balls and banquets given by the various Greenwich Village organisations of the day, for the benefit of a working class whom they never regarded except as the objects of charitable radical chic. 'Emma Goldman lectures to millionaire's daughters on the causes of poverty, its misery and degradation. They listen quite sympathetically ... After the lecture they drive home in their limousines to dress for dinner.'<sup>55</sup> He describes another occasion, with heavy sarcasm, in the issue for March, 1917:

A daughter of one of the very wealthy R\_\_\_\_s, who entertains extensively, gave a party the other day. She had given so many, that she wanted to think up something very original, so she decided on a "Socialist Dinner." She invited all her young multi-millionaire friends, and sent every girl a red cloak to put on, and every man a pair of workman's overalls ... They got drunk and ribald, - just like socialists; threw food around the room, - just like socialists.<sup>56</sup>

Kling's position here is that not only were the 'society socialists' disingenuous but that media reports of activity 'just like socialists' were biased. Bearing this view out, a comparable report in the conservative *New York Times* read:

Here was exemplified strikingly how closely in the zealous Socialist's mind are associated the idea of propaganda and the idea of having what is generally known as "a good time"; in many cases the ideas seemed to be the same. To do anything that promised to advance the "Cause" seemed to them the very frenzy of joymaking.<sup>57</sup>

This heavy irony was not evident however in a report in the same newspaper, announcing:

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<sup>55</sup> Josep Kling, 'Paroles d'un Blesse', editorial, *The Pagan* 1.7 (November-December 1916), p. 48.

<sup>56</sup> *The Pagan* 1.11 (March 1917), p. 26.

<sup>57</sup> 'Strange Gathering at Socialist Ball', *New York Times*, 30 January 1911.

#### TEA DANCE FOR BELGIUM

Huge social event at Ritz-Carlton will clothe the needy

The greater New York Committee of the Commission for Relief in Belgium yesterday announced that details had been completed for a huge tea dance for the benefit of the destitute in Belgium and northern France. The dance will be held in the large ballroom of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel on Monday afternoon, Feb. 7.<sup>58</sup>

There followed a long list of the donors and officials of the Committee: presumably raising money for the destitute of Europe was to be considered more respectable than raising money for the destitute of America.

For the producers of other independent magazines, this salon socialism might have been an uncomfortable topic. It is clear, as we saw, that Randolph Bourne had more than an inkling of what Kling meant. Even so, of all the *Seven Arts* contributors, Bourne was probably the least wealthy, and there were few 'grass roots' socialists on the editorial board of *The Masses*, with its brand of 'cheery' radicalism. In addition to fashionable socialism, *The Pagan* also attacked fashionable charity. It printed a particularly damning article on Misha Appelbaum, by Harry Salpeter (later a gallery owner and art collector). For a time Salpeter worked for Appelbaum, a 'humanitarian' who raised money for 'charity' through sensationalist performances, the kind of figure memorably satirised by Sinclair Lewis in *Elmer Gantry*. Of Appelbaum, Salpeter remarked:

The poor and downtrodden exist for Misha Appelbaum only as objects for his professional pity. He seems to derive a strange kind of pleasure ... from weeping over the misfortunes of the poor. But he has neither the vision, nor the imagination, nor the wish, to work for a social reorganization that would abolish poverty and its attendant evils. Like the charity organizations he affects to despise, he feels that the poor are really necessary to his existence ... Not the poor, but the ruling classes, in society, ought to be grateful to him. He dulls the revolutionary ardor of embryo-radicals, perverts and dissipates – as much as lies in his power – their idealistic energy, and tries to delude them into believing that shallow, trivial, sporadic reforms can regenerate society.<sup>59</sup>

*The Pagan* therefore consistently regretted how much America's wealth was dependent on America's working poor, demonstrated in actual labour terms but also in complicit 'charitable' attitudes. In a final irony, Appelbaum's subsequent debts

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<sup>58</sup> 'Tea Dance for Belgium', *New York Times*, 31 January 1916.

<sup>59</sup> Harry Salpeter, *The Pagan* 3.3 (July 1918), pp. 48-49.

and extremely theatrical failed suicide attempt caused him to make an appeal for charity for his own disbanded 'humanitarian cult', on a vaudeville stage in 1921.<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, Kling found himself in the position of having to support his own shop and magazine by raising money through the organisation of *Pagan* balls; one a year is advertised. The final issue of the magazine advertises the 'sixth annual Pagan ball at Tammany Hall', the ball being in the offices of the New York administrative headquarters of the Democratic Party and not, like some others, at the Ritz. This kind of fundraising is of course dependent on, and participant in, commercial activity, and so highlights the difficulty which all anti-commercial or anti-capitalist idealists face, that of functioning to disparage the culture which maintains the dissent, entering into a process of historical recontainment. His first fundraising event, a performance evening in the newly-built Aeolian Hall, was a comparatively low-key affair, which he reports in the November-December 1916 issue. He had invited both Frank Harris and Max Eastman to contribute.<sup>61</sup> 'What a time they had breaking into the literary world, - Frank Harris, Shaw, Masfield .... Hackwork, rejected manuscripts .... Magazines started and given up ... debts, disappointments, heart-aches ... No helping hand to keep them from falling' he remarks. He goes on to report that Harris, well-known (and well-rewarded) by then for his novels concerning the rigours and necessities of economic hardship, refused to attend while Eastman, that extremely elegant socialist, would attend only on payment of one hundred dollars. It is worth noting here that in any case the idea of the fund-raising ball was initiated not by either *The Masses* or *The Pagan*, but largely by Jewish socialist organisations and newspapers in the 1880s and 1890s, a fact relevant to the ethos of *The Pagan* which is raised again shortly.<sup>62</sup>

Without attempting to raise some of the complex issues about the possibility of destroying and replacing a system from within, it is easy to see that this magazine had

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<sup>60</sup> 'Misha Appelbaum and Wife Poisoned', *New York Times* (23 October 1920); 'Misha Appelbaum in Vaudeville Debut', *New York Times* (30 September 1921).

<sup>61</sup> The Aeolian Hall was newly built (1912), in Midtown Manhattan, by the Aeolian company, piano manufacturers.

<sup>62</sup> See Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 105-109. Current work by Michels also concerns the association of the Yiddish press and Bohemian New York: See 'Cultural Crossings: Jewish Intellectuals, Yiddish, and the New York Intellectual Scene, 1880s to 1920s' in *Choosing Yiddish* (Forthcoming publication, Wayne State University Press, 2010). I am grateful to professor Michels for drawing my attention to this.



insufficient independent means, and for survival had to turn to the inequitable commercial system which it would have liked to deplore. Like other magazines it also supported itself by advertising; regular full page advertisements for the nearby Singer Brothers department store in the Bowery appear, featuring different brands of the latest ‘Graphophones’. Christine Stansell has implied that *The Pagan* and *The Quill* succumbed to the increasing commercialisation of bohemianism in the Village, by advertising tea-shops and gift-shops.<sup>63</sup> In fact the advertising base is there from the first issue: advertisements also appear early on for Strunsky’s tea-shop, well-known for years as the meeting place for the more established ‘bohemian’ intellectuals, and it is likely to have been merely the case that there were more tea-shops and thus more demand for advertising. *The Pagan* was obliged like many other publications to acknowledge and use the commercial process to survive; the perpetrators of *The Seven Arts* and *291* felt that commerce was inadmissible as a framework for the production of authentic art, but nevertheless were of course also ultimately dependent on the same process. It appears that *The Soil*, in spite of its overt support of commercially-motivated art (window-dressing) and popular activities (boxing, for instance), would still condemn a system whereby fine art was made with a financial motive. Few periodicals or publications, however radical, politically left-wing, or idealist, are free from some form of commercial necessity or constraint. But it is, in part, the nature of their varied attempts to free themselves of such constraints that imparts to these magazines such a fascinating tension; *The Soil*’s attempt at an argument which subsumed the products of commerce under the broader spread of Art shows again how much the separation between the two was at that time a central concern. *The Pagan*’s nearest equivalent to Brooks’ sociological divisions is written in the form of the following satirical note:

TWENTY	
Handsome	Idealistic
Stalwart	Simple
Agile	Nobly-intelligent
THIRTY-TWO	
Fat	Commonplace
Heavy	Pompous
Bald-pated	Snobbish
and dull-eyed	and stupid <sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Stansell, *American Moderns*, p. 335.

<sup>64</sup> *The Pagan* 1. 5 (September 1916), p. 37.

Kling, like Brooks, noted here the degeneration that occurs when the ‘nobly-intelligent’ is exposed to the necessity to earn money through the conventional commercial channels.

### *The Pagan and other minority magazines*

In spite of Kling’s very consistent support of *The Masses*, which was frequently mentioned in his editorials or commentary, as we have seen, Eastman did not offer personal help. There are regular advertisements for *The Pagan* in *The Masses* up to its cessation in 1917 and regular advertisements for *The Masses* in *The Pagan*; one can readily surmise the possibility of a reciprocal arrangement. Publicly, Eastman’s solidarity was clearly a different matter.<sup>65</sup> It is feasible to suggest that the lack of contemporary acknowledgement by the more ‘fashionable’ end of the Greenwich Village radical intelligentsia is one of the reasons for the near disappearance of *The Pagan* from the annals of modernist criticism. Kling is not recorded or remembered as a member of any of the salon circles of well-to-do, influential backers of American bohemia of that time (of Mabel Dodge, Louise Arensberg, or Alfred Stieglitz in New York for instance, or Gertrude Stein in Paris), many of whose members have since become established as significant contributors to the development of American modernism. It is clear from the magazine that Kling was disinclined towards the type of salon socialism described by Mabel Dodge, where ‘left-wingers’ and ‘anarchists’ appeared to be merely categories of the fashionably bohemian sociological miscellany she collected and invited to her ‘evenings’.<sup>66</sup> The rather eloquent, brief recollection by McCourt, quoted earlier, in which he remembers that Joe Kling went for a bath and a lunch to the house of his nephew every Sunday morning, points to an obscure and poverty-stricken old age.

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<sup>65</sup> See William L. O’Neill, *The Last Romantic: A Life of Max Eastman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 232-236. Eastman was not, of course, the only eminent radical to become a right-wing sympathiser after World War II – John Dos Passos is another example. Kling maintained his left-wing stance until the end of his life.

<sup>66</sup> Dodge’s autobiography states a sample mixture: “Socialists, Trade Unionists, Anarchists, Suffragists, Poets, Relations, Lawyers, Murderers, ‘Old Friends,’ Psychoanalysts, IWWs, Single Taxers, Birth Controlists, Newspapermen, Artists, Modern Artists, Clubwomen, Woman’s-place-is-in-the-home Women, Clergymen, and just plain men met there.” Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Intimate Memories: The Autobiography of Mabel Dodge Luhan*, ed. Lois Rudnick (New York: Sunstone Press, 2007), p.124.

One other possible reason for its lack of critical appraisal is the misrepresentation of *The Pagan* in later ‘little magazine’ bibliographies. Hoffman makes the following statement:

Joseph Kling’s Greenwich Village magazine is important for two reasons: 1) it illustrates admirably the fortunes and manners of the truly *avant-garde* publication; 2) in its pages appear the early writings of many important modern poets.<sup>67</sup>

The second point in this account is true of so many of the magazines of the time that while it is clearly of importance to literary history, it is not perhaps so important as a measure of the importance of any particular magazine as compared to any other in the field. The ‘early writings of many important modern poets’ also appeared in many other independent publications in the same period such as *Others*, *The Little Review*, *Blast*, *The Egoist*, the more conservative *Poetry Review of America*, and the carefully-edited *Poetry*. A number of mainstream organs – *The Smart Set*, *Collier’s Weekly*, *Harper’s* for instance – can also boast this distinction.<sup>68</sup> But the first reason Hoffman puts forward is also misleading. Though intensely left-wing, and not reactionary in the art it chose to publish, *The Pagan* was not linguistically or formally *avant-garde*, or ‘advance guard’. And though there is that sense which the Hoffman bibliography suggests, that it does ‘provide a program or platform; and ... the expression of some school of political or aesthetic thought’, there is nothing in the bibliographic entry to suggest that Hoffman viewed *The Pagan* as having provided this political ‘expression’.<sup>69</sup> Regarding the artistic experimentalism commonly understood within the definition of the term ‘*avant-garde*’, Kling, a little like Robert Coody, writes defiantly against newness or experimentalism for its own sake.<sup>70</sup> Of Abraham Walkowitz, indeed, he has the following to say:

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<sup>67</sup> Hoffman, *The Little Magazine* p. 249.

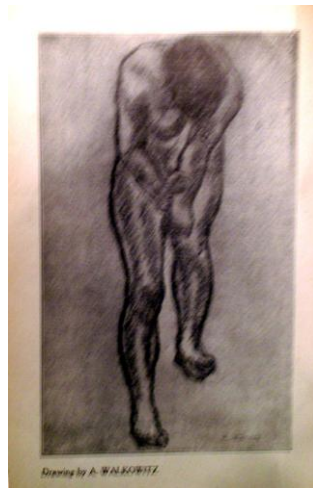
<sup>68</sup> See the introduction to this thesis for more examples.

<sup>69</sup> See Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, p. 6; also see pages 3, 4, 155, 189.

<sup>70</sup> Only Hoffman’s use of the term as related to magazines is referenced here, but one could refer to the many more recent discussions and dissections of this term such as Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

Wolkowitz [*sic*] was a good painter once. Little by little however, he lost his sanity, or honesty (or both), and began to draw linear abortions and other meaningless monstrosities. But then he has the satisfaction of being a leader among new-movementists, and inspiring anemic old maids to clasp their hands ecstatically.<sup>71</sup>

This rather complex insult clearly intends to imply that Walkowitz's drawings, as examples of a 'new movement', are executed with intent to please the vacuously fashionable. Ignoring the misogyny of the phrase 'anemic old maids', we recall that Coady, in *The Soil*, also accused Walkowitz of 'vulgarity' and Metzinger of being 'hindered by a struggle to be new'.<sup>72</sup> The Walkowitz drawings reproduced in early issues of *The Pagan* are decidedly not 'experimental': the nude in the issue for July-August 1917, though strikingly foreshortened and strongly delineated, is a conventional life study.<sup>73</sup>



This fact, and subsequent critical misrepresentations or non-acknowledgements, coupled with the magazine's lack of prominent sponsorship, offer only tentative suggestions regarding the reason for the retreat of *The Pagan* into obscurity, after the heyday of bohemian New York gave way to the war and afterwards to the jubilant, sometimes desperate modernism of the 1920s. The situation of *The Pagan* as regards the modernist canon could be read as the equivalent to a commercial loss; lack of adequate capital outlay (sponsorship) or pro-active marketing (bibliographic entries and discussion, subsequent reproductions, and so forth) have prevented its long-term institutional survival. None of the magazine editors in this study would have

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<sup>71</sup> *The Pagan* 1.1 (April-May 1917), p. 29.

<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 146.

<sup>73</sup> Abraham Walkowitz, drawing (untitled), *The Pagan* 2.3-4 (July-August 1917), frontispiece.

appreciated this terminology, but it is nevertheless appropriate. ‘Aren’t there writers this very moment who know that their stories, poems, plays, have little or no chance of ever reaching the public, but who continue writing all the same ...?’ asked Kling in his last work, *Balance Sheet* (1961).<sup>74</sup>

### The Pagan: *Style, Aesthetics, and The Market*

Along with the Walkowitz above, most of *The Pagan*’s art plates could largely be described as naturalistic, though decorative, and occasionally as decadent. There are one or two exceptions (see the covers for December 1917 and October 1918, p. 183). This is also true, of course, of the art in *The Masses*, which like many popular journals and establishment newspapers published at least one parody of Cubism in the wake of the 1913 Armory Show.<sup>75</sup> Rebecca Zurier offers the following opinion about the art of *The Masses*: ‘The overall tenor of the magazine suggests why the experiments of the European avant-garde would not have been consistent with its goals ... For all their adventurousness, *The Masses* crowd maintained certain traditional preconceptions.’ Zurier goes on to say that *The Masses* ‘presented an art that was contemporary but hardly modern – radical, perhaps, but not avant-garde.’<sup>76</sup> If we also remember that a large number of *The Pagan* contributing artists (Glittenkamp, Bellows, Henri, Frueh, Gropper, for instance) were also *Masses* artists, and the consistent reference to *The Masses* evident in *The Pagan*, then if there were political reasons for presenting, say, artwork which was more immediately ‘accessible’ to readers then it might be deduced that Kling shared these views. On the contrary, however, he wrote in *The Pagan*: ‘Hence, it is an inescapable conclusion, that the artist who looks to the people for comprehension, judgment and appreciation, is a fool’.<sup>77</sup> *The Little Review* (‘no compromise with public taste’) was unequivocal on this point: ‘This nonsense about art for the many, for the majority – I am sick of it’ wrote Ezra Pound, a quote reproduced in *The Pagan*.<sup>78</sup> The art of *The Pagan*, then, might be expected to

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<sup>74</sup> Joseph Kling, *Balance Sheet* (New York: self-published, 1961), p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Rebecca Zurier, *Art For The Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics 1911-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), discussion pp. 158-163.

<sup>76</sup> Zurier, *Art For the Masses*, p. 159; *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>77</sup> Joseph Kling, ‘A Propos, et Mal A Propos’, *The Pagan* 1.5 (September 1916), p. 34.

<sup>78</sup> Ezra Pound, quoted in *The Pagan* 2.5 (September 1917), p. 11, reproduced from *The Little Review* of the same month.

represent Kling's personal taste rather than having any ideological connotation, and his idea of taste continued to support the idea that art must remain divorced from, and untainted by, political or economic consideration. It is worth considering here, however, that many of the artists featured in *The Pagan* (Henri, Glintenkamp, Walkowitz, Zorach, Minor, Benn for instance) belonged to a group which Allan Antliff has called 'Anarchist Moderns' and were against the conventional teaching of the American art 'academy', attending classes at *The Modern School*, the Ferrer school set up in New York by Emma Goldman and other American anarchists. According to Antliff 'individualism in the arts was particularly consonant with anarchism', something which to them meant freedom of individual expression by the artist, and a rejection of the rules of the art schools (in which, however, Henri in particular had been very thoroughly schooled).<sup>79</sup> It did not perhaps occur either to Kling or to these artists to speculate about the conditions in which their 'individual' tastes or abilities had been formed, those conditions which, Bourdieu makes clear, make it impossible for either genius or critical taste to exist in isolation from their larger sociological structure.

Despite the consistency of *The Pagan's* message and the high standard of its art work, it exhibited great variety in both style and presentation. There was little quality control; certain issues, for example, were printed on an assortment of paper of different weights, and look as though the graphic reproductions were added separately afterwards. Taking a position radically opposite to that of Stieglitz and De Zayas in 1911, Kling appears to have striven to produce the magazine with whatever materials were available and affordable - the message, in his view, clearly being more important than the medium. The magazine's size (originally about 6" by 4") also attests to this: it changed from the second year and volume; it was an inch longer and half an inch wider, and accommodated 64 rather than 48 pages, with greatly expanded contents. The paper, however, remained flimsy. The 64-page format continued until the last, intermittent issues of 1921 and 1922. The general appearance of the text is very conservative, largely printed in a standard 10- or 12-point Times Roman typeface. Exceptionally in *The Pagan* for 3rd July 1918, there is one 'caligrammatic' poem.

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<sup>79</sup> Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 33.

The idea behind this composition by ‘Goldsmith Kittle’ (perhaps another pseudonym for Kling, who often appears to incorporate into these the G and K of his name) in the shape of a rather phallic syrup-dispenser, bears some similarity to the poem ‘A Bunch of Keys’ by J. B. Kerfoot in *291* earlier (1915 – see chapter 2). Neither, perhaps, is intended entirely seriously.

The illustrations in Figure 12 (p. 202) , show different cover designs used in *The Pagan* between 1916 and 1918. The October 1918 cover has an almost experimental appearance, but Kling chooses, for the most part, a decorative, or even decadent, style like that of the November cover for the same year. The 1916 cover is more obviously a representation of what might be termed a modernist acknowledgement of tradition, like *The Seven Arts* a commerce with the past: through the ancient pagan standing stones in the foreground we see spread out the contemporary city with its factory chimneys.<sup>80</sup> The styles and subjects vary from issue to issue; neither is there any single trademark ‘pagan’ title or ‘logo’. The lack of design constraint made it possible for each cover artist to be relatively free to integrate the title text into the body and/or the content of the art, resulting in composite designs with a good deal of conceptual variety. Some of the covers for 1916 represent first, a Greek drawing of Epicurus, then a series of mythological (Pagan) references (a druid monolith, Pan, Pierrot and Columbine). The 1917 themes are extremely varied, one or two also being printed in two colours. One is signed by Carlo Leonetti, who went on shortly to gain and maintain a reputation with his cover designs for *The Masses*. The June 1917 cover for *The Pagan* and the July 1917 cover for *The Masses* are both illustrated by bold Leonetti screen prints, but while the one for *The Pagan* presumably illustrates a pagan or druid, Morrisson points out that *The Masses* by that time was adapting its covers according to commercial marketing techniques: Leonetti’s drawing displays, no doubt with the *Masses*’ public in mind, a smiling Eastern European peasant with beautifully poised delicate hand and revealing décolletage. (See Figure 13, p. 203).<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Though this is the pre-Judaeo-Christian past, a ‘pagan’ past, rather than a medieval or renaissance one.

<sup>81</sup> Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*, chapter 5, ‘Pluralism and Counterpublic Spheres: Race, Radicalism, and the *Masses*’, pp. 167-202.

As an example of Kling's emphasis on the individual creativity of the artist, Leonetti's choice reinforces Kling's conviction. One or two issues of *The Pagan* have a composite design for the front and back covers, a device which encloses and thus, conceptually at least, adds to the coherence of the contents. At least two covers show the subjugation of Parsifal by the Pagan knight (Feirefiz) in Eschenbach's eponymous twelfth-century epic poem, in which Parsifal is engaged on a quest for the Grail. (See Figure 14, p 203). Given that some of the editorials and commentary are signed 'A. Pagan Knight', and the fact that the Grail was originally a pagan symbol, this reference forms a continuous theme throughout various volumes of the publication – the pagan who conquers the Christian but is merciful in victory. At least one contribution is by someone who calls him/herself 'Tristan Klingsor', a pseudonym comprised from the names of two characters from different German thirteenth-century epics, or from Wagner's operatic adaptations.<sup>82</sup> Gropper's design is the more macabre – the Blake-ean giant Pagan subduing the helpless Knight. One might read this as the might of the allies; the war was almost over by then and it might depict the helplessness of Germany in defeat. Given Gropper's strong left-wing affiliations, it could also represent the subjugation of the underclass.

The German *Parsifal* theme also makes for interesting tension in the retrospective reading of this magazine, given the then growing anti-semitism throughout Europe, and indeed displayed during the nineteenth century in Wagner's writing. Though it was not yet official national German policy, specifically anti-Semitic laws had been proposed in Germany in the 1870s and 1880s, taking a lead from the theories of Marr and Treitschke who in turn drew on Martin Luther, later to be extensively quoted by the Nazis.<sup>83</sup> This anti-semitism had been a primary factor leading to the original waves of Jewish immigration to the United States, earlier in the nineteenth century.

### The Pagan, *Judaism, Commerce, and Art*

The December 1917 cover is from book that is transliterated 'Yizkar' (more usually now written Yizkor) a Jewish prayer commemorating the deceased. The design is

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<sup>82</sup> The interest in Wagner dates back to Europe of the 1890s, Nietzsche in particular.

<sup>83</sup> See William I. Brustein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).



intertwined menorahs (Hanukkah candles) which form a design but also resemble Hebrew script. This resemblance is carried through to the title design where the word ‘Pagan’, with its slants and serifs, is also reminiscent of Hebrew. A note to the contents of this issue credits the cover art with being the copyright of the Poale Zion publishing company. Poale Zion was a Zionist Marxist organisation founded in Russia, which in 1903 set up a branch in New York, the Socialist Jewish Labour Party. The cover contributes to *The Pagan*’s consistent support of Jewishness and the Jewish community. This marked characteristic, unusual in the Greenwich Village setting, has



Cover design, *The Pagan*  
December 1917

been underplayed in most subsequent references to the magazine and often in descriptions of the New York ‘modern’.

Despite the fact that the very earliest work of Crane (as Harold Crane) who worked in the bookshop for a while, was first published in the pages of the *Pagan*, and that Kling had given him the position of ‘assistant editor’, Crane refers to him in a letter merely as ‘the old hebrew.’<sup>84</sup> Crane was perhaps unconscious of, or indifferent to, his ‘casual’ anti-semitism, but his remark warrants an examination of a New York demographic between 1916 and 1922, extremely relevant in the context of the hierarchical organisation of labour in America to which *The Pagan* set itself in opposition. In 1916, the year that *The Pagan* was first issued, the population of Manhattan’s Lower East Side, two blocks away, was home to 350,000 first- and second-generation Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. This was a radically

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<sup>84</sup> Paul Bowles, *O My Land, My Friends: The Selected Letters of Hart Crane* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1997), pp. 6-7, p. 11.

different group from a previously-established American Jewish community who were predominantly of German extraction, lived mainly in north Manhattan, and were ‘acculturated.’<sup>85</sup> Many of the more recent immigrant population lived in cramped and insanitary conditions, and worked long hours in garment industry sweatshops, contributing greatly to the commercial well-being of the United States but scantily to their own. By 1915 a large number of these workers were also members of labour unions, many with Jewish leaders. Marxist doctrines imported from Eastern Europe informed the socialist movement which grew up around the educational public culture created by such leaders as the charismatic Abraham Cahan, editor of *Vorwaerts* (*The Jewish Daily Forward*) who also delivered public lectures, and Philip Krants, founder of *Di arbeter tsaytung* (Workers’ News) the leading Yiddish newspaper. The original founder of the Socialist Party of America, Morris Hillquit, also came from this background.<sup>86</sup> Tony Michels has examined in detail the inextricable relationship between the Jewish community and the rise of the socialist movement in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York.<sup>87</sup>

I was sitting in a car. A motorman (off duty) put on a pair of shell-rimmed glasses, opened out a Jewish newspaper, and began to read leisurely.

“Well?” .... you ask?  
Well nothing. That’s all that happened.<sup>88</sup>

The point of Kling’s 1917 aphorism is that for many readers of Yiddish (Jewish) papers it was the first time that they had been able to see their own spoken language in print. Clearly some readers were Hebrew scholars; those who did not understand the Hebrew language could often read Hebrew characters, but the Yiddish language,

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<sup>85</sup> See Rafael Medoff, *Jewish Americans and Political Participation* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2002), Ch.1, for details.

<sup>86</sup> Norma Fain Pratt, *Morris Hillquit: A Political History of an American Jewish Socialist* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979); Milton Doroshkin notes the rise of the (predominantly socialist) Yiddish press began in 1885 with the *Yiddishes Tageblatt* (Jewish Daily News), then the weeklies *Arbeterzeitung* (Workers’ Times), the voice of the Hebrew Labor Federation, and the anarchist *Freie Arbeter Shtimme* (Voice of the Free Worker), both in 1890, through to the *Vorwaerts*, founded in 1897, with its circulation, in 1915, of almost 200,000: see Milton Doroshkin, *Yiddish in America: Social and Cultural Foundations* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1969), pp. 97-135, ‘The Social Role of the Yiddish Press.’

<sup>87</sup> Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), points out the process of radicalisation of the Jews as a result of living in New York. He also describes the growth and extent of the Yiddish press of the time.

<sup>88</sup> Joseph Kling, *The Pagan* 1.12 /2.1 (April-May 1917), p. 45.

spoken in a number of regional varieties, was common to all the Jewish people of this later surge of immigration. Some, particularly among women, had been illiterate and the perusal of newspapers therefore combined a learning experience, a challenge, and a social education.<sup>89</sup> The papers were important enough, as Michels illustrates, for whole families to have their photographs taken with their favourite newspaper placed in a prominent position.<sup>90</sup> Kling's reader is an off duty cab man, and thus working class. Kling's short statement points out the interrelationship between Jewishness, commerce, and socialism, but given that *The Pagan* is part of the Greenwich Village scene, also points to the geographical relationship between American Judaism and American modernism.<sup>91</sup> Michels points out, too, the fervour with which educational lectures were attended by the Yiddish-speaking population of New York:

Public lectures provided the cheapest, most direct way for socialists to get out their message. Every week, several times a week, the movement's intellectuals volunteered to speak on myriad topics: "Socialism and Religion," "The Development of Private Property," "The Necessity of Education," "Socialism from A to Z," "The Origin of Rights," "History as Science," "What Is Trade Unionism?" and many others. Education in Yiddish was generally unheard of in the late nineteenth century ... Yiddish lectures were highly popular pastimes, particularly among the young [who] flocked to hear intellectuals address some political, historical, cultural, or scientific topic.<sup>92</sup>

Kling, then, was intimately acquainted with this extraordinary fertile environment of working-class betterment by self-education of the Jewish population, only possible, paradoxically, in America, not in the Europe which they had left behind.

In comparison with the extraordinary intellectual and political activity that took place among this section of the New York population from 1885 onwards, it seems important to note that *The Masses* was founded as late as 1911. Because of its subsequent eminence, it is a common narrative that *The Masses* was the first

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<sup>89</sup> Mary Antin, in her autobiography *The Promised Land* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912) gave a detailed personal account of Jewish life in Eastern Europe and the constraints of anti-semitism combined with economic hardship, the impetus for the emigration of many families to the US.

<sup>90</sup> Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts*, Ch. 1 and 2, photograph p. 114.

<sup>91</sup> Cristanne Miller has begun to explore this relation and uses the example of the magazine *Others*, though she refers mainly to Lola Ridge, a catholic poet, and Mina Loy, a half-Jewish (on the paternal side) English woman with a comparatively privileged background. Further, many working-class American Jews were against the 'melting pot' idea of assimilation which Miller appears to assume, as was Kling, and as indeed was Randolph Bourne, whom she cites in support of her argument. (Miller, "'Tongues loosened in the melting pot': the poets of *Others* and the Lower East Side", *Modernism/Modernity* 14.3 (September 2007), 455-476).

<sup>92</sup> Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts*, p. 77.

magazine to bring socialism to a wide audience, but placed within the context of these very high-circulation, 30-years established Yiddish dailies and weeklies, *The Masses* seems less significant as a socialist organ. It is not suggested here that *The Masses* merely propounded what was ‘fashionable’ – on the contrary one or two of its contributors were tried and imprisoned for their views – but what is in question is why a number of standard accounts of *The Masses* discount thirty years of previous socialist writing, propounded not by a group of comparatively privileged intellectuals but by the workers and organisers themselves.<sup>93</sup> Throughout the life of *The Pagan*, Kling continued to ensure that it articulated a central conflict - between those who lived socialism and those who merely embraced it as a fashionable adjunct to Greenwich Village bohemian life.

He added to this an observation on the plight of the Jewish intellectual: in an early ‘editorial’ entitled ‘In Re Judea Et Al’ he wrote:

The Jewish intellectuals find themselves in a rather vexing dilemma. If they make up their minds to be liberal internationalists, they are suddenly reminded by some new phase of anti-semitism that they are Jews.<sup>94</sup>

This references the continued political tension for the Jewish population (the difficulty of the ‘liberal-internationalist’ position for Jewish people in an anti-Semitic environment) and gives *The Pagan* a unique position among many seminal American early modernist publications. Kling does not name the ‘liberal internationalists’ or *The Seven Arts*, but a number of *Seven Arts* contributors might have qualified as Jewish ‘liberal internationalists’: James Oppenheim, Waldo Frank, Paul Rosenfeld, Walter Lippmann, and Louis Untermeyer. There is what might in this context be viewed as an interesting *lack* of reference to Judaism in the body of *The Seven Arts*, in spite of the fact that there was increasing national anti-semitism, some of which, as Scroggins points out, was already evident in Columbia University, where Oppenheim

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<sup>93</sup> For example see Thomas Maik, *The Masses Magazine 1911-1917: Odyssey of an Era* (New York: Garland, 1994), p. 21: ‘the *Masses* was the conscience of the era – and a robust and cheery conscience it was’ is a phrase which implies that the ‘era’ comprised merely those who might otherwise have been able to forget the conditions of the working class. Daniel Aaron’s *Writers on the Left*, also, acknowledges the influence of Emma Goldman but not the political actions or written articles of the social group from which she came.

<sup>94</sup> Joseph Kling, ‘In Re Judea et Al’, *The Pagan* 1.3 (July 1916), p. 44.

had graduated.<sup>95</sup> By 1922 most Ivy League Universities had made overt what had already been covert policy: that of restricting their Jewish intake. Further back, Stephen Steinberg traces the rise of American institutional anti-semitism more specifically to the onset of the second wave of Jewish immigration, although, he writes, ‘American conceptions of Jews in the abstract at no time lacked the unfavourable elements embedded in European traditions’.<sup>96</sup> Walter Benn Michaels has further argued that ‘Twenties nativism made anti-Semitism an element of [a race-based] American cultural citizenship and therefore an essential aspect of American identity’ and one could feasibly regard *The Pagan*, and its support for Judaism, as a victim of the process of racial sidelining and elimination that Benn Michaels identifies.

In the same editorial, Kling regrets that these same Jewish intellectuals are divided among themselves:

The Jewish litterati [*sic*] in New York form a curiously bohemian group. They affect a satiric contempt for laymen of all classes, especially the well-to-do. Their favorite haunt is one of the cafés on the lower East Side. Here they sit and gossip at all hours of the day, about shoe-strings, or the universe. Their most usual topic, however, is some absent fellow-scribbler’s failings. They treat him as gently as wolves treat a carcass. Their particular delight is to ferret out his plagiarisms, real or invented.

(I may mention in passing that such amiable lack of envy is not limited to Jewish litterati. In swell clubs of authors and artists, for example, - But there they display less crudeness, and more hypocrisy.)<sup>97</sup>

There were some specifically Jewish publications based in New York which were not known for their radicalism, such as *The Menorah Journal*, which was published ‘for the advancement of Jewish culture and ideals’. The Menorah Society was formed in 1906 by a group of Harvard students, and the journal began as the organ of what had by 1914 become the Intercollegiate Menorah Association. It was published from then until 1962, though Robert Alter’s ‘epitaph’ for the magazine indicates that it ‘logically should have died’ in 1929 but was kept going in decline by its editor Henry Hurwitz as a lifetime commitment. Its early contributors were, Alter points out,

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<sup>95</sup> Mark Scroggins, *The Poem of a Life: A Biography of Louis Zukofsky* (Washington: Shoemaker Hoard, 2007), p. 25.

<sup>96</sup> John Higham, quoted in Stephen Steinberg, *The Academic Melting Pot: Catholics and Jews in American Higher Education* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1977). For a gratuitous and offensive Jewish stereotype of the 1890s, in a ‘progressive’ magazine, see Vance Thomson and James Huneker, *M’lle New York*, 1.2 (23 August 1895), p. 13, ‘White Music and - Jewish’.

<sup>97</sup> Joseph Kling, *The Pagan* 1.3 (July 1916), p. 44.

Harvard men who ‘had sat at the feet of Santayana, William James, Josiah Royce, and other great turn-of-the-century Harvard humanists.’<sup>98</sup> It was a magazine aimed at the Jewish intellectual, but the Harvard Jewish intellectual would perhaps not be among the noisy, contentious, backbiting crowd which Kling describes in the Greenwich Village café. *The Menorah Journal* did not attempt to align its own culture with the bohemianism of the urban intellectual scene, an activity which was *The Pagan*’s niche. Frank, Oppenheim, and Rosenfeld were more anxious to promote an art form which represented a consolidated ‘America’. These three writers also made contributions to *The Menorah Journal*, although only Rosenfeld was a Harvard graduate. Randolph Bourne was one of a number of non-Jewish supporters invited to contribute to the journal, with ‘The Jew and Trans-National America’ appearing in 1916.<sup>99</sup> There is an important contrast between the nationalism of *The Seven Arts* and its fervent desire for the arts to represent ‘America’, while *The Pagan*, in support of a more particular working-class community, speaks against the idea of the ‘Americanization’ or ‘Americanism’ then purposefully incorporated into the educational system and politically encouraged as patriotism in time of War.

Munson writes that *The Pagan* merely ‘prepared the way’ for Hart Crane and other poets of the 1920s.<sup>100</sup> In spite of his acknowledgement that the magazine has never been given its critical due, Munson’s main interest is to describe where he first met Crane, which was in Kling’s shop; he does not mention that he himself was also more than a casual contributor to *The Pagan*.<sup>101</sup> Hoffmann’s bibliographic entry for *The Pagan* concurs with his view. Neither Hoffmann nor Munson mention that some of the most ‘avant-garde’ writing in the magazine is not the general collection of poetry, or Crane’s work or even (at that time) Zukofsky’s, but the spare, little translated fiction of the Yiddish writers Mani Leib, Moishe Nadir, and Joseph Opatoshu.<sup>102</sup> A

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Alter, ‘Epitaph for a Jewish Magazine: Notes on the “Menorah Journal”’, *Commentary* (May 1965), p. 51.

<sup>99</sup> Bourne, ‘The Jew and Trans-National America’, *Menorah Journal* (December 1916), p.277. Some of these articles look, now, a little unfortunate, relying, despite their support for the Jewish community, on the stereotypes which encouraged prejudice against that community.

<sup>100</sup> Munson, *Awakening Twenties*, p. 77.

<sup>101</sup> ‘The King of the Strange Marshes’, a poem, *The Pagan* 3.10 (February 1919), p.5; *The Pagan* 3.11 (March 1919), p. 54, a short article entitled ‘From a Teacher’s Note-Book’.

<sup>102</sup> I have given these the more standard modern Yiddish spelling adopted by Doroshkin rather than the spelling supplied by Kling, which is inconsistent. There were a number of disputes among the different factions of the Yiddish press whether to adopt a more ‘germanised’ spelling of Yiddish or to retain the more esoteric earlier representations. ‘Opatawshu’ (born Opatovsky) seems to be Kling’s own. For a

number of the Yiddish writers whom Kling chose to represent in *The Pagan* had already achieved some eminence within their own community, though they remain even today largely untranslated into English. Doroshkin gives the following list:

A large group of gifted writers emerged on the American scene, creating a substantial folk-literature. The works of many are now considered classics. We will mention only a few. Some poets were: Morris Rosenfeld, David Edelstadt, Morris Winchevsky, Yehoesh, H. Leivick, Abraham Reisen, M. L. Halperin, and Mani Leib. Novelists, playwrights, and short-story writers included Sholem Asch, David Pinski, Ossip Dymov, Peterz Hirshbein, Moishe Nadir, Isaac Raboy, and Joseph Opatoshu. Important critics and commentators; Abraham Liessin, Moissaye Olgin, Abraham Cahan, Chaim Zhitlovsky, Abraham Coralnick, and S. Niger.<sup>103</sup>

A number from this list, Leib, Opatoshu, Reisen, Asch, and Nadir, are consistently represented in *The Pagan* between 1916 and 1922, as is also Isaac Peretz (translated by Kling). The dedication cited on page 167 above also implies that Nadir and Kling were personal friends.<sup>104</sup> Here one might further mention a number of Jewish artists who contributed to *The Pagan*: Louis Lozowick (who also translated), Horace Brodsky, William Auerbach-Levy, Ben Benn. Some drawings of Abraham Walkowitz (a Jewish immigrant from Siberia), appeared despite the reservations Kling expressed (see page 146).

Nadir's *Peh-el-Peh* contains a gently philosophical refutation of a *New York Evening Mail* editorial which had indeed suggested that the Jews were an 'egotistic, exotic, incomprehensible people'. The piece, one of about twenty which make up the body of *Peh-el-Peh*, also suggests that the Jews might on the whole be pacifists:

Worst crime of all, we sometimes urge our fellow-Christians to be human. Thus when we see you brother-Christians clutching at each other's throats, we plead with you, "Stop! stop ... don't slaughter each other, brothers."

An exotic, incomprehensible people, we Jews.<sup>105</sup>

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more detailed study of Yiddish variants, see Sol Steinmetz, *Yiddish and English: A Century of Yiddish in America* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1985).

<sup>103</sup> Doroshkin, *Yiddish in America*, p. 79.

<sup>104</sup> Moshe Nadir, *Peh-el-Peh*, jointly published with Joseph Kling, *Improvisations* (New York: Pagan Publishing Co., 1920). The copy in the New York Public Library (one of a very few publicly available) is inscribed as a gift from Joseph Kling in 1921.

<sup>105</sup> Nadir, 'The Chosen' from *Peh-el-Peh* as above, p. 54.

Most of the poems in Nadir's short collection had already appeared in *The Pagan*. Apart from pointing out the hypocrisy of anti-semitism ('The Chosen', 'Martyrdom') the items also point out the futility of war ('Valour', 'Loyalty'). Nadir associates pacifism with the tenets of Judaism but it seems necessary to point out here that he, and thus Kling, were probably in a minority; Louis Ruchames indicates that most Jewish socialists, after America's entry into World War I in April 1917, became pro-war, and the pro-war Jewish Socialist League of America was formed, lending a further poignancy to the December Poale Zion cover discussed above.<sup>106</sup> The pages of the relevant issues of *The Pagan* act therefore as a reminder of the contribution of American Jewish Socialists to the war effort, and also of the fact that America benefited commercially from its involvement in World War One.

Given that Zukofsky's later poetry (particularly the dense, brilliant "'A'") is suffused with Yiddish and Hebrew, and with references to Judaism and to his own early life in the Lower East Side, this is perhaps the place to look briefly at one of the very early poems published in *The Pagan*, a poem which is remarkable not for its Judaism but for its complete lack of it. As stated above, no biography or critical study of Zukofsky has previously mentioned the presence of his poems in this magazine. In a recent biography, Scroggins remarks on the lack of personal reference in Zukofsky's *Morningside* poems, 'the utter absence of this city boy's actual surroundings', and also on the 'air of Paterian aestheticism', and also his indebtedness to various of his contemporaries – H.D., Wallace Stevens, and Rabindranath Tagore.<sup>107</sup> Scroggins' judgement appears to apply to 'Dawn After Storm' in *The Pagan* for June-July 1921:

All night the scowling gods have cast huge boulders down the mountains,  
And have hewn the skies with thundering sledges,  
Hiding the stars in secret places.  
Now there are dank green silences of forest,  
And the gashed cedars and the riven cypresses  
Stand motionless before the dawn.

...

Even now, I thought I heard a flurry as of a shroud.  
Was it the last frightened ghost,  
Seeking the shelter of a hollow tree,  
Rustling through the bark

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<sup>106</sup> Louis Ruchames, 'Jewish Radicalism in the United States', in *The Ghetto & Beyond: Essays on Jewish Life in America* ed. by Peter I. Rose (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 242.

<sup>107</sup> Scroggins, *The Poem of a Life*, pp. 32, 33.



Of some knotted, rueful cypress?

We can read the poem as a straightforward representation of an Olympian dawn, the long first line becoming the long night, with the harder consonants the boulders, and the use of classical allegory echoing that of Imagists H.D. and Richard Aldington. The sibilants of the skies, sledges, stars, and secret paint the commotion of the fierce night whilst the forest, gashed cedars, and cypresses, linked by the same sibilants, become the result of the commotion. The apprehension expressed in the final stanza, the ‘frightened ghost’, might be the poet’s own, the faint hint of another storm to come. The poem demonstrates considerable mastery of the use of line, the elusive rhythm which Pound advocated early for Imagists (‘in sequence of the musical phrase’) and a touch of self-conscious academicism in its achievement of style. On the surface this is a poem of hope, of ideals, perhaps of a boy at the beginning of his career (an ‘ernster mensch’ at Columbia).<sup>108</sup> There is nothing to suggest that Zukofsky was consciously trying to avoid his culture, but at the time there was perhaps a need for him to assert himself at college in spite of that culture, the ‘unwritten code of anti-Semitism that reigned in the English department’.<sup>109</sup> Scroggins also attributes to Zukofsky what he generalises as a Jewish trait: ‘the perennial economic desire to pull themselves out of their parents’ working-class milieu’.<sup>110</sup>

The prosperity of the US was formed by the very commercial motives which were set against those of ‘true’ art by the Young Intellectuals and other American Moderns. Clearly Kling, allied to his cause, incorporated into it this view of art. Even *The Soil*’s embrace of new technologies, as we saw, was largely governed by a conventional ‘pure aesthetic’.<sup>111</sup> To attempt to isolate ‘the art world’ from the world of labour and production appears extremely problematic: the fact that the phrase can be used meaningfully merely shows the pervasiveness of the idea that somehow the sale and purchase of art is something different from the sale and purchase of other goods. As noted in previous chapters, Bourdieu suggests an ‘inverted’ economy that works through a type of subterfuge, in that the market for a work of art depends on a denial of itself, but nevertheless produces an actual monetary gain in the long term that is

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<sup>108</sup> Scroggins, *ibid.*, pp. 24-48.

<sup>109</sup> Scroggins, *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>110</sup> Scroggins, *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>111</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic’, *Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 254-266.

quite independent of the ‘value’ of the materials used to create it. He points out too that the ‘producer’ of the ‘work of art’ is not the artist alone but the whole body of people involved in the ‘production of belief’ in its value; critics, art dealers, gallery curators, editors, publishers, and so on, and the historical moment in which they are placed.<sup>112</sup> Importantly, the world of Art does not, in Bourdieu’s view, exist separately from the world of commercial and class struggle but its rules and operations are incorporated into, and dependent on, that world. If we thus deny, following Bourdieu, the ‘inspiration’ of the artist, then while Kling’s magazine is a critique of capitalist inequalities, his aesthetic ideals are a result of them.

That the producer and editors of *The Pagan* are, however, aware of the way that socialist and anarchist principles are compromised by economic circumstances is no more clearly indicated than in a short item of fiction called “‘Young Man, You’re Raving’” by Emmanuel Julius. The story concerns a young ambitious reporter, Jordan, who works for an unnamed newspaper:

“YOUNG MAN, YOU’RE RAVING”

“Young man,” blurted Clark Harding as he threw Jordan’s copy into the receptacle for all that proves unsatisfactory to newspaper editors; “young man, you’re raving.”

Jordan snapped:

“That’s a big story.”

“Maybe it is, but I’m not paying you for what you consider big stories. I want the stuff that I want – and I don’t want anything else. That’s clear, eh?”

“Maybe so,” Harding returned, “but this is my paper, and I’m not interested in knocking the gas company.”<sup>113</sup>

Jordan and his friend Nelson obtain an old linotype machine and produce “The People’s Paper”, an organ for the working classes aiming to ‘fight the people’s battles’ and expose corporate exploitation. In the first issue, ‘The seven-column headline, “Gas Company Exposed!” could be read a block away.’ The paper becomes wildly successful; it supports, and helps to win, a street car strike, resulting in better

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<sup>112</sup> Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, p. 76.

<sup>113</sup> “‘Young Man, You’re Raving’”, story by Emmanuel Julius, *The Pagan* 1.9 (January 1917), p. 30.

pay and conditions for the car workers. Its success enables its owners to move into bigger quarters, and also attracts a demand for advertising space from a department store, The Hub, which caters primarily for working people. The advertising space gradually grows to sixteen pages. Jordan becomes friendly with the general manager and owner of the department store, Mr. Brill. One of Jordan's reporters produces a story:

A few days later Spencer brought in his first story. It told, in a manner that amazed, of wages in the department stores. It exposed the unjust fines system, the long hours, the foul working conditions – and above all, the miserable wages. And, The Hub was the worst of all.

"This is great stuff," said Jordan.

Spencer was delighted, but when he read his story that afternoon he noticed that all references to The Hub had been stricken out.

Meanwhile Jordan 'learns to love' Mr. Brill's daughter, and they marry. He joins the Masons and other corporate organisations, and finances a theatre. The 'People's Paper' wrote fearlessly of international injustice but 'he gradually grew to feel that it was impracticable to reform too close to home.' Inevitably, the story turns full circle:

And when another car strike broke forth, Spencer, who covered the story in a masterful manner, brought in copy that championed the side of the strikers. But Jordan was a director in the car company, so he wasn't enthusiastic.

"Young man," blurted Jordan, as he threw Spencer's copy into the waste basket; "young man, you're raving."<sup>114</sup>

One reason this story is significant is its extraordinary parallel to the actual life of its author. Emmanuel Julius was born in Philadelphia to a Jewish-Russian bookbinder and his wife. He worked for a time on Henry Mencken's *Baltimore Herald* and, while in New York, for the *New York Call* and subsequently for other socialist newspapers. In 1916 (only six months before this piece appeared in *The Pagan*) he married Marcet Haldeman, the daughter of a wealthy physician. Marcet managed a profitable bank which had been left to her by her mother. Together the Haldeman-Juliuses bought a flourishing radical newspaper in Kansas, *The Appeal To Reason*, in 1919, which they made into a considerable commercial success. He began the *Appeal's* pocket series with Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam*, which sold in large quantities very successfully. This series became the Little Blue

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Books, among the earliest American paperbacks, and was aimed specifically at those of the working population who would buy ‘good’ books if they were small enough and affordable enough. The publications list includes over 1,500 titles, ranging from the works of Wilde, Nietzsche, Balzac, Shaw, Dickens, Wells, Shakespeare, Whitman, to socialist lectures and pamphlets on sex, birth control, atheism, and the principles of electricity. And it is of some interest to this thesis that the most widely-known book by the author James Oppenheim, the poetry collection *Songs for the New Age*, which contains the poem ‘Bread and Roses’, was reprinted as a ‘Little Blue Book’ in 1926.<sup>115</sup> The Haldeman-Juliuses became rich, paradoxically, while providing for the American working population something which they had never had. Instead of dime novels they could buy, for their ten cents, classics of literature, philosophy, and politics.<sup>116</sup> Julius’s story therefore appears to have been eerily prophetic; his own history, beginning as keen reporter and progressing to multi-millionaire publisher, closely parallels that of his hero, although at the time it was written he could not have known that this would be the case.<sup>117</sup> Such a story must be said to embody the American Dream, in which, inevitably, the familiar compromise of the artistic in favour of the commercial must inevitably be imbricated.

### *Conclusion: The Paradox of The Socialist ‘Product’*

One more reason for the inclusion of this story within this discussion is its obvious theme of the capitalist erosion of socialist idealism. Were Kling’s own lack of material wealth, his resistance to American capitalism, and his idealism, then a barrier to the success of his magazine? Though he used advertising and fundraising, ought he to have devised a more consistent, targeted marketing strategy to boost his sales?

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<sup>115</sup> Oppenheim, *Songs for The New Age* (Girard: Haldeman-Julius, 1926). Earlier reprints notably include Upton Sinclair’s 1915 anthology *The Cry For Justice: An Anthology of the Literature of Social Protest* (New York: Upton Sinclair, 1915).

<sup>116</sup> See the Haldeman-Julius Collection at Pittsburgh State University, Kansas, on-line starting at <http://library.pittstate.edu/spcoll/hj-lbb-1.html>. Details of the life of Emmanuel Julius from Dale Herder, ‘Haldeman-Julius, the Little Blue Books, and the Theory of Popular Culture’, *Journal of Popular Culture* 4.4 (Spring 1971), pp. 881-891.

<sup>117</sup> Julius remains unremarked as a pioneering figure in American modernism, though he is known to have associated with such leading figures as Alfred Kreymborg and Clarence Darrow. Their meetings are documented in *Famous and Interesting Guests of a Kansas Farm: Impressions of Upon Sinclair, Lawrence Tibbett, Mrs. Martin Johnson, Clarence Darrow, Will Durant, E. W. Howe, Alfred Kreymborg and Anna Louise Strong* (Kansas: Girard Press, ‘Reviewer’s Library’, 1936) Marcet Haldeman-Julius’s memoir of their earlier years.

Julius, like Kling, had a well-developed epistemology which he expounded in his autobiographical work *The First Hundred Million*.<sup>118</sup> Dale Herder summarises this as follows:

According to the epistemology of Haldeman-Julius, knowledge was not to be valued for its own sake, as a sterile adornment. Like Aristotle, he perceived the *summum bonum* – the highest good – of mankind to be happiness. And happiness, the paperback king saw it, was to be achieved primarily through self-betterment, through knowledge of one's weaknesses and potential. Knowledge, therefore, was of *extrinsic* rather than *intrinsic* value. It was a means to an end. It was to be *used in the role of civilizer*, as "the foe of all the stupid and evil forces that mar and threaten life."<sup>119</sup>

This recalls, slightly adapted, the Eudaemonism evident in *The Pagan*'s title, discussed above. Herder's description points to a serious 'eudaemonist' philosophy, the 'highest good of mankind' being the happiness of eliminating human stupidity, the 'rubbish between burst-Slopolitan covers'. Thus the presence of Julius' work in *The Pagan* surprisingly emerges as a factor which contributes to the ethical and political unity of the magazine's graphics, features, editorials, and literature. The title of *Pagan* turns out to be a powerful semantic; it can refer to the non-Christianity of its producer, to the Pagan knight, magnanimous in victory, to the sensual 'man-animal' who craves a 'nobler happiness' than the '[i]nsanity of man's flesh.' It refers ironically, too, to the fact that the 'role of civilizer' is in the magazine's pages taken on by one who may have been viewed as a Pagan, an 'Old Jew'; whose socialism comes directly from his and his neighbours' life experiences and not from the dubious wellspring of the radical chic. Kling quotes from *The Masses*:

A pagan ... is someone who knows something about life and still enjoys it ... To be intelligent, to be sensitive, to realize the cruelty and ugliness of life, and yet to love it – that is a rare gift, and it involves a quality of healthy ironic humor which is not one of our most conspicuous American traits.<sup>120</sup>

This definition of a 'pagan' relates, clearly, to the 'healthy ironic humo[u]r' of his own magazine.

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<sup>118</sup> Julius, Emmanuel, *The First Hundred Million* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928).

<sup>119</sup> Herder, 'Haldeman-Julius, the Little Blue Books, and the Theory of Popular Culture', p. 888. Italics Herder's.

<sup>120</sup> Max Eastman, quoted from *The Masses*, in *The Pagan* 2. 3/4 (July-August, 1917), p. 32.

Kling's own relatively humble beginnings and ending, moreover, themselves point to a paradox which is a major consideration here. The contents and the circumstances of *The Pagan* make a statement against duplicity, hypocrisy, and compromise in a way that other magazines do not. To make 'no compromise with public taste', for instance, Margaret Anderson employed, among other means, the self-styled apogee of taste, *Vanity Fair*: 'It has always pleased me to remember that *Vanity Fair* paid our way to New York' she writes at one point in her autobiography.<sup>121</sup> Always described as charming, articulate, and beautifully tailored ('I disapprove of snobbery in matters of thought as intensely as I approve of it in matters of dress') she used the accepted social and sartorial 'taste' of her class to float a vehicle which subverted and questioned the literary taste of that class, but not the conditions of its existence. The seriousness of *The Masses*' political message is at odds with its jolly tone; the radicals of *The Seven Arts*, without the cushion provided by a wealthy backer, terminated their magazine and dispersed into less politically active (and hence more conservative) areas. The cultural and artistic capital of *291*, for instance, (though it is an extraordinary product) was increased through Stieglitz's recognition of long-term collectors' values; Stieglitz, as overall perpetrator of the magazine, was vociferously 'anti-commercial' yet he relied on a private income and the money from the sales of his photographs. *The Soil* celebrated the products of commerce, including the machines which, as Zurier points out, threatened the livelihood of the working classes by replacing their function.<sup>122</sup> It promoted the products of populist enterprise: the poor who made money through their genius, such as Charles Chaplin, Bert Williams, Toto the Clown, and Jack Johnson, to a wealthy audience who dabbled in shares and took ski-ing holidays. Magazines like *Rogue* and *Bruno's Bohemia* were often the organs of gossip for a rarefied and self-consciously exclusive coterie. And at the back of all these, and a great number of other publications of the time, are often people of position, wealth, and perhaps power: Louise Arensberg, Mabel Dodge, Annette Rankine, Natalie Barney, Agnes de Meyer, Katherine Dreier. Joe Kling died as he lived; *The Pagan* with its consistent stance against institutionalised capitalist processes and pseudo-'just like'-socialists, seems for years to have died with him. The

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<sup>121</sup> Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years War* (London: Knopf, 1930), p. 142.

<sup>122</sup> Zurier, *Art for the Masses*, p. 161: 'The technological dynamism that inspired many artists and writers at work in New York ... was never celebrated in the pages of *The Masses* ... advocates of industrial sabotage were inclined to view the machine as the worker's enemy.'

consistent convergence of *The Pagan*'s art work, its contents, and its political ethos throughout almost six years of its publication, evidence a considerable achievement which was, essentially, a labour of love.



Figure 10: *The Pagan*: R. B. Kitaj, Portrait of Joseph Kling



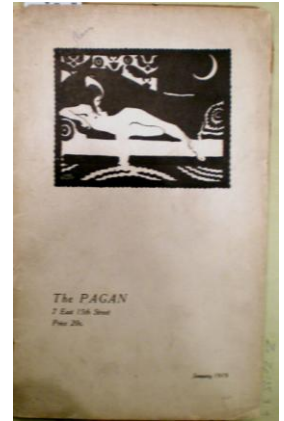
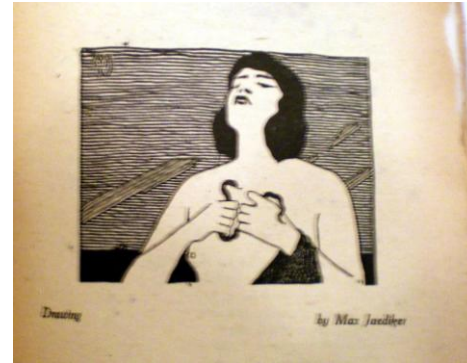
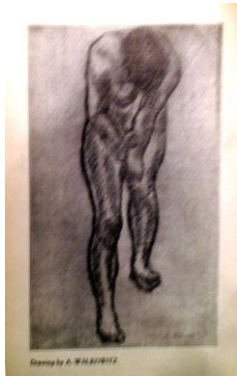
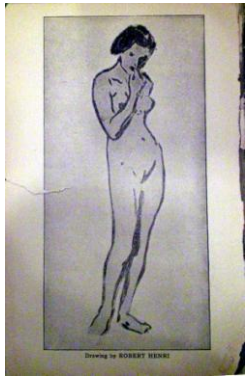
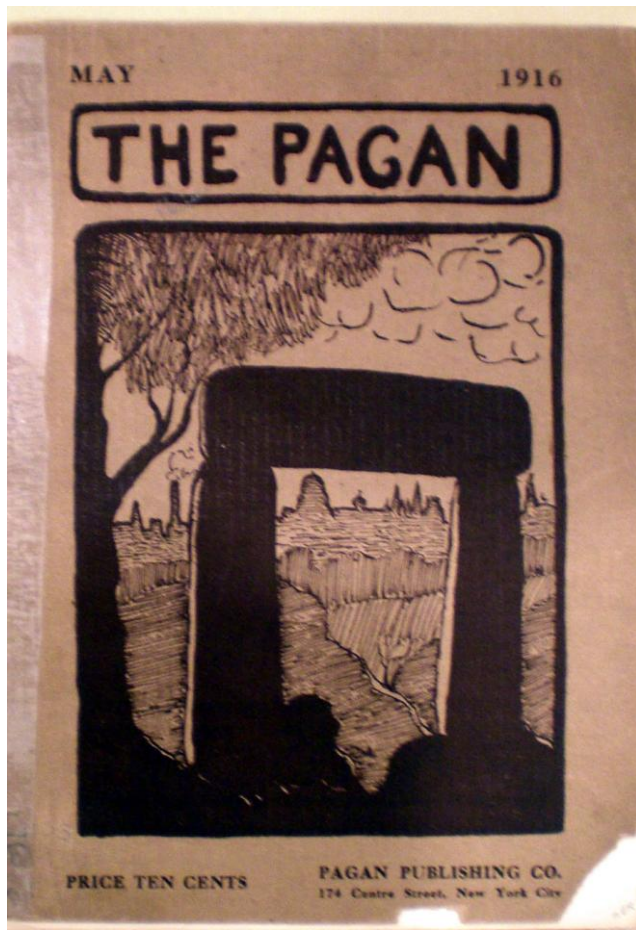


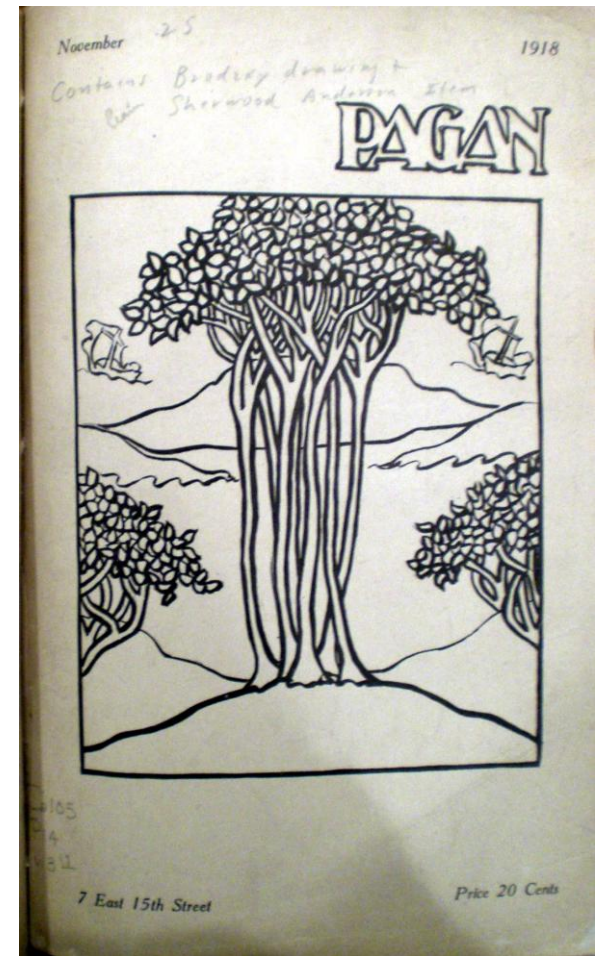
Figure 11: *The Pagan*, Drawings and Covers



May 1916



October 1918



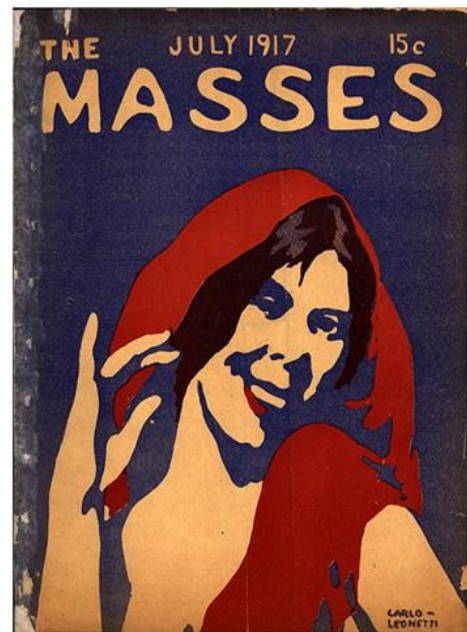
November 1918

Figure 12: Sample covers from *The Pagan*



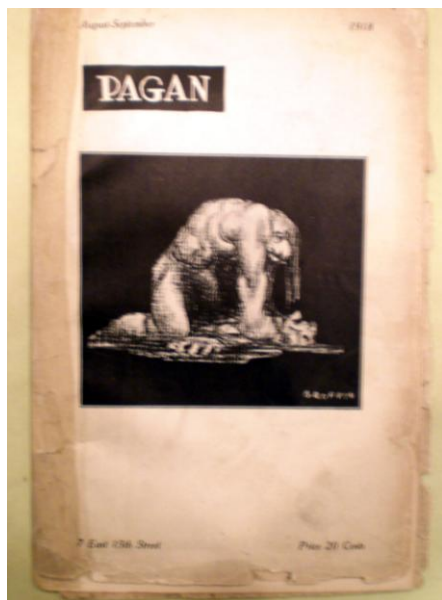


Cover design, Carlo  
Leonetti, *The Pagan*  
June 1917



Cover design, Carlo  
Leonetti, *The Masses* July  
1917

Figure 13: *Pagan* and *Masses* cover designs



Cover design, William  
Gropper, *The Pagan*  
August-September 1918



Cover design, Joseph  
Foshko, *The Pagan*  
February 1919

Figure 14: *Pagan* cover designs

## Conclusion: Commerce and The New

### *Extent, Limits, and Constraints*

Writing in the collective context of periodicals necessarily offers a wide range of topics and approaches, and the various parameters of this discussion need some acknowledgement here. Though I have touched on issues concerning race and gender in context, I have not engaged in any extended discussion of the way that racial distinctions operate in any of these magazines (except briefly in *The Pagan*) and neither have I engaged in extensive discussion of gender issues. Before addressing what I *have* written, therefore, this is perhaps a reasonable point at which to rationalise and summarise what has been left out.

If the idea of ‘race’ is interpreted narrowly as the difference between black and white, all the magazines are owned and operated by white Europeans or white Americans. *The Soil* is notable in that it achieves a successful, non-hierarchical multicultural approach and a lack of ‘othering’ of black Americans, a feature which has been understressed in subsequent readings. In the sports reports, for instance, there is a refreshing lack of any attribution of assumed racial characteristics when discussing boxers or rodeo riders. Bert Williams’ article also exhibits an objective self-knowledge, a hyper-awareness, of what it means for a black popular entertainer and comedian to impersonate a black stereotype. It seems, too, that Coady was pro-active in the support of black schools and black universities in the area; the children’s pictures in *The Soil*, also exhibited in Coady’s Washington Square Gallery, were done by black children from inner city schools. Later Coady wrote asking John Quinn if he would kindly donate some pictures to Howard University, which would, he thought, not otherwise be able to obtain ‘good stuff’ for the edification of its students. Quinn replied that ‘art for the masses’, or propaganda on art in schools and colleges, was not, in his view, a good idea. ‘It is very sporty of you’, he wrote to Coady, ‘to attempt to get a collection together for them’, but declined to contribute.<sup>1</sup> Chapter 1 above described Hiram Moderwell’s article and its good intentions; however as I have

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<sup>1</sup> Letters, Coady to Quinn, 2 September 1919, Quinn to Coady, 4 September 1919, John Quinn Memorial Collection, New York Public Library.

argued in detail elsewhere, his article appears to subordinate the original, 'unacceptable' black versions of songs and suggests 'professional' (i.e. white) versions of the same thing.<sup>2</sup> There are clearly, too, issues surrounding *The Soil*'s and *291*'s praise, in common with much art of the time, of what they regarded as 'the primitive', and neither Bourne's disappearing, 'dignified' metaphorical Indian from 'Trans-national America' nor indeed Coady's exaltation of the dime store effigy took into account the fact that the 'Americanization' of the Indian had been achieved in schools by force, prohibition of native languages, and removal of children from their locality.<sup>3</sup>

Attitudes and injustices to black US residents which occurred at the time are well documented, and were consolidated by a government whose leader, President Woodrow Wilson, it has been suggested, was 'probably the most racist president of this [the twentieth] century.'<sup>4</sup> The topic is obviously too large to be explored here. But it is worth noting that a number of magazines were produced, at that time, by the African-American community and have made as significant a contribution to the development of modernist thought. One, *The Crisis*, was the official journal produced by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was inaugurated in 1909 by a group of white liberals and which, a century later, is still in production.<sup>5</sup> *The Crisis* was founded in 1910 by W. E. B. Du Bois, from this organisation, as a premier crusading voice for civil rights, and by the 1920s had become a prominent voice of the Harlem Renaissance, publishing the work of Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson ('To America' was published as early as December 1917), and Jessie Fauset, among others. The most well-known magazines edited by African-Americans emerged from the 1920s, the one-issue *Fire!!* of Wallace Thurman in 1926 being a classic (followed by Thurman's similarly one-issue, if less renowned, *Harlem*). *Opportunity* was founded in 1923;

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the precise ways that the article promotes and incorporates racial hierarchies, see Victoria Kingham, 'Seven Arts, 7 Lively Arts, and American Cultural Criticism' (unpublished M. Phil. thesis, Cambridge University, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> On the 'Americanization' of American Indians, See Desmond King, *The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 2, 'How To Become An American'.

<sup>4</sup> Details of Wilson administration and his treatment of black people from Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Ch. 4, "The Color Line", pp. 106-135.

<sup>5</sup> From the NAACP history at its official web site, <http://www.naacp.org/about/history/index.htm>.

other magazines designed to support the African-American cause were *Crusader* (1918-1922) and *The Messenger* (1917-1928). These last two radical reviews published the work of Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, and Jean Toomer along with that of many other significant African-American artists and writers. A full-length work charting the influence and effect of these different magazines, produced by the black community, on the modernist canon has yet to be written, though a short 'Directory of Black Literary Magazines' was published in 1970.<sup>6</sup> Back in the 1920s, Black Harlem flourished for a time, though sometimes as the subject of an 'entertainment' trip for those white people who came from the suburbs for a day to experience the vicarious thrill of 'negro life'.<sup>7</sup> In 1929 it was noted, for instance, by the African-American writer and editor George Chester Morse, as an example of the way that black writers were regarded by most of the press, that 'few are the reviews [of black writing] that do not contain the words primitive and exotic.'<sup>8</sup> It is clear, also, that there are other English-language magazines produced by 'hyphenated' minorities which are only beginning to find their way into the critical discourse of modernism, both in and out of the New York which is the geographical site relevant to this thesis.

Turning now to the issue of gender, it is clear from the contents that all four magazines are creatively and editorially dominated by the work of men, a disparity which applies especially to *The Soil*. Nevertheless, *The Seven Arts* was entirely funded, and *291* part funded, by women. But the work of innovative editors like Harriet Monroe (*Poetry*), and Margaret Anderson (*The Little Review*), the poetry of H. D., Mina Loy, Amy Lowell and Marianne Moore, the sociological advances of Elsie Clews Parsons, the political campaigns of Emma Goldman, and the campaign for birth control by Margaret Sanger are just a few of the American events before the onset of World War One which heralded the feminist new: a new freedom and a new

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<sup>6</sup> Doris J. Milton and Nerissa L. Levi, 'Directory of Black Literary Magazines' (Washington: Negro Bibliographic and Research Center, 1970, Focus: Series 1). There are a number of chapters on magazines of the Harlem Renaissance in the recent *Cultural and Critical History of Little Magazines* edited by Thacker, Brooker, Longworth, and Gasiorek, Vol. 2.

<sup>7</sup> The decline of the 'Harlem Renaissance' and the subsequent decline of interest in the work of black American writers have been noted in Jeffrey C. Stewart's *The Critical Temper of Alain Locke* (New York: Garland, 1983), p. 197. Also see James Weldon Johnson, 'Dilemma of the Negro Author', *American Mercury*, 1928, Harry K. Shaw, *Perspectives of Black Popular Culture* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1990), Gilbert Osofsky, 'Symbols of the Jazz Age: The New Negro and Harlem Discovered', *American Quarterly* 17.2/1 (Summer 1965), pp. 229-238.

<sup>8</sup> George Chester Morse, 'The Fictitious Negro', *Outlook and Independent*, 21 Aug 1929, p. 648.

place in society for American women. A number of extremely cogent works have, over the past twenty years, gone a long way towards reinstating the place of women in the formation of the modernist canon, in part through the selection and rejection involved in their editing of modernist magazines. Costello, Banta, Blau DuPlessis, Douglas, Friedman, Gilbert and Gubar, Hanscombe and Smyers, Kouidis, Marek, Miller, Schulze, and many others have produced instrumental and thought-provoking studies.<sup>9</sup> One could also address in depth the effect of implicit gender assignment in these magazine texts, the consistent rhetoric of male and female. One could cite Waldo Frank's essays in *The Seven Arts* for instance (art was to be 'virile' and strong, inspired by 'the lush urge of a creative spirit'), and De Zayas' and Picabia's ambiguously misogynistic representation of women in *291*, and the prurience behind the line art and the objectification of women which is apparent in the text and art of *The Pagan* despite its stated support for the feminist cause. While each of these four magazines might have made some progress towards dissipating the predominant media view of American womanhood at the time, one could, in a more focussed study, readily point out their inherent anomalies and contradictions on the topic.

Worth remarking briefly is the fact that despite the unprecedented amount of contemporary campaigning by and on behalf of American women, very little of this is seriously considered by any of these four different, diverse, and avowedly radical magazines. It is true that *The Pagan* includes passages in support of Margaret Sanger's campaign for birth-control and a letter from Margaret Sanger asking for supporting funds. Sanger's 'What Every Girl Should Know' was widely distributed at the time and a little later Haldeman-Julius (for whose story see chapter 4) issued the pamphlet in the 'Little Blue Books' series. But the sidelining or denigrating of

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<sup>9</sup> Among others: Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Bonnie Costello, Christanne Moore, eds., *The Selected Letters of Marianne Moore* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998); Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Susan Stanford Friedman, *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H. D.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 1 (London: Yale University Press, 1987); Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers, *Writing for their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (London: Women's Press, 1987); Virginia Kouidis, *Mina Loy: American Modernist Poet* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); Jayne Marek, *Women Editing Modernism: 'Little Magazines' and Literary History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995); Schulze, Robin, *Becoming Marianne Moore: The Early Poems, 1907-1924* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002).

women's creative work is apparent even in *The Pagan*. The many women poets who were published in its pages were regarded by a number of contemporaries, as we saw, not as poets so much as merely unsuccessful competitors for Kling's favours.

With regard to the other three magazines, there was a significant lack of engagement with the question of women's position and rights. *The Seven Arts* published an appreciable amount of women's poetry and women's fiction. It may be that they did not feel that there was any need, in their circle, to address the issue; Waldo Frank was married, for instance, to an extraordinary woman of great intellect whose work has, in one sense, survived his own.<sup>10</sup> His wife, Margaret Naumburg, was one of the instigators of the form of treatment that is now called art therapy, generally recognised as an essential discipline in the management and exploration of mental conditions. It is interesting too that Brooks' wife, Eleanor Brooks, acted as his mentor and interceptor while he suffered from his own mental condition.<sup>11</sup> There is also a particularly trenchant review by Edna Kenton in the body of *The Seven Arts* itself, which implies that Kenton believed that women in the United States had already gained independence. Kenton – herself a forthright and emancipated journalist – addressed Margaret Deland's novel *The Rising Tide*. She pointed out the anomalies of Deland's presentation of American women as tied and hidebound by tradition, as though that were an old-fashioned idea:

In a world dimpled with woman lawyers since the 1870s, one of Mrs. Payton's friends exclaims: "That nice Wharton child is going to study law if you please!" When Freddy considers nursing: "What!" says old Mrs. Holmes, accustomed since the Crimean war to Florence Nightingale's healthful innovations, "See a gentleman entirely undressed in his bed!"<sup>12</sup>

The passage censors Deland for misrepresenting contemporary American womanhood, which according to Kenton circulated freely in the world of men. While it is true that American women were admitted to some universities much sooner than their British counterparts, the vast majority of American women were clearly not so privileged.

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<sup>10</sup> From 2007 there has been a revival of interest in Frank: the 2007 conference of the American Literature Association was entitled 'Reconsidering Waldo Frank'. <http://tinyurl.com/ykunqh3>.

<sup>11</sup> Eleanor Brooks, letter to James Oppenheim, August 1916. James Oppenheim Papers, Box 1, New York Public Library.

<sup>12</sup> Edna Kenton, 'Mothers of Daughters', a review of Margaret Deland's *The Rising Tide*, S.A. 1.1 (December, 1916), p. 188.



Not only working-class but middle-class women felt the sting of discrimination. For example Alice Austin White, writing in *The New Republic* in 1917, wrote: ‘If I happened to be male instead of female, which God forbid, I could double the family income by teaching at the university, but the university does not yet see its way to employing women on its teaching staff, and I therefore scrub the square of my kitchen floor instead.’<sup>13</sup> It is thus perhaps predictably difficult to find, within the pages of a year-long run of *The Seven Arts*, any indication that The New Woman existed to be taken seriously; one could find more assertive specimens of fictive American womanhood within the pages of any Henry James novel. While *The Seven Arts* still published plays in which the ‘emancipated’ woman reverts to type and settles down to being a wife and mother, Elsie Clews Parsons, a noted psychologist, sociologist, and anthropologist, had been recommending “trial marriage” since 1906.

*The Soil* exhibits an almost total lack of contributions by women. Apart from a number of poems *about* women by Maxwell Bodenheim, women’s writing is conspicuously absent both in the body of the magazine and in the list of books for sale. The only exception to this is the interview of Annette Kellermann, which places emphasis on the fact that Kellermann’s work is artistic as opposed to prurient. Though Kellermann herself, throughout her life, was adamant on this point, one is led to wonder what effect her publicity pictures, naked but for abundant, strategically placed hair, had on the male population at large, many of whose wives and girlfriends still dressed in ankle-length costumes and kept their heads covered when they went out.<sup>14</sup> Or whether the ameliorating exercises which she suggested to help housewives to enjoy their chores actually, in the end, furthered or hindered the cause of women’s emancipation. Apart from this article one might have to characterise the approach of *The Soil*, with its emphasis on male sport and industrialisation, as predominantly masculine.

291 contains in sustained metaphor, as we saw, the idea of the female camera, the ‘daughter without a mother’, feminised precisely to correspond with the control that

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<sup>13</sup> Alice Austin White, ‘A Middle-Class Wife’, *The New Republic* (January 20, 1917), p. 323-324.

<sup>14</sup> A twenty-first century biography recalls the extraordinary life of Annette Kellermann, who lived to be 89 years old. See Emily Gibson and Barbara Firth, *The Million Dollar Mermaid: The Annette Kellermann Story* (Crow’s Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005).

the male is able to exercise over the female. Most of its contents are the work of men, addressing an imagined male readership and assuming the maleness of the art community, both artists and dealers. It does however contain a brief paragraph which sympathises with the plight of an expectant single mother who shot herself, a paragraph which comments on the lack of sympathy inherent in American law. We saw also the editorial statement of Meyer and the striking art collaboration between herself and De Zayas.

Finally, although I have throughout acknowledged the complicated question of the way 'American identity' has been, and is continually being, constituted, it would be impossible here to engage closely in that discussion, although clearly it was of paramount importance to writers and thinkers of that time. Their preoccupation with national identity as expressed in arts and letters is part of what distinguishes them against their European counterparts. This is even true of *The Pagan*, which while it was against 'Americanization' referred a number of times to its editor's American-ness – 'I pay my taxes' and to modern urban conditions, and of Alfred Stieglitz who, though "291" and *291* evidenced a great deal of European influence, consistently emphasised his own American-ness.

Having begun by outlining what this study does not investigate, the next section summarises its general approach and what it has aimed to achieve, and develops a little further some of the ideas which it has raised. An interdisciplinary approach has been possible, in part due to the wide range of research material now available in electronic form, and I have also intentionally unconfined the periodicals from specific art-historical or cultural-historical disciplines. I have chosen for example to dwell as much on the fiction and the poetry as on the critical essays in *The Seven Arts*, recalling that its founding editor was primarily an author of fiction rather than a social critic. *The Pagan*, though it has some reputation as a 'Village' periodical, goes unmentioned in most literary contexts save that of the original genesis of Hart Crane as a major poet. Most critical studies of *291*, also, have sidelined the text and foregrounded the art, and I have tried to redress this balance a little. None of these chapters concentrates on the career of any single magazine contributor, though I have reinstated Joseph Kling, hitherto almost ignored, as a figure of some significance.

Given the number and range of periodicals in which each writer placed work (a phenomenon which becomes very apparent from the on-line collections and cross-references), while the author-based approach is instructive in many ways, it does not necessarily address the importance of the way a periodical communicates within its cultural moment.

I have also addressed, where possible, the significance of a magazine's readership. In each chapter the likely, or at least the target readers have been estimated partly through the direction and content of the advertising: advertisers clearly expected readers to belong to a particular social group. It was also essential to each editor to attract wealthy readers, and readers who were aware of becoming, by virtue of what they read, an exclusive group. This idea, we saw, was made use of by *The New Republic* in several advertisements in *The Seven Arts*. The editors of each magazine represented themselves as exclusive, at least in the sense of being arbiters of taste; there is reference in every one of these four to the contrast between the taste of its own published writers and editors, as compared to the taste of the American general public. Nevertheless the magazines were concerned with American identity, with being American, however much they may have feared (or rejoiced) that the American public was unready to receive their gospel, and however much their definitions of what was 'American' were subject to the inbuilt omissions and modifications mentioned above in connection with race and gender. Above all, the notion of commerce, as set out in my Introduction, has been shown to be central to the viewpoint expressed in each magazine and the following summarises some of the ways in which this was demonstrated.<sup>15</sup>

### *Commerce: Four Periodicals*

The temple of art cannot exist without trade. Moreover, the trade in art profits from the belief that art is sacred and beyond commerce. For art-dealers denying the economy is profitable: it

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<sup>15</sup> For a fascinating discussion of the way advertising and different 'stories' of modernism conflict in various papers, see Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible, 'Modernism in Magazines', in Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gaziorek, Deborah Longworth, and Andrew Thacker, eds., *A Handbook of Modernism* (forthcoming, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

is commercial to be anti-commercial. Such denial and simultaneous embrace of money is present in almost any transaction in the arts.<sup>16</sup>

In Hans Abbing's *Why Are Artists Poor?* the idea quoted above is a given assumption. The idea of the anti-commercial being a commercial proposition is central to the institution, the 'temple' of art. Indeed, in a very strong sense it is impossible to imagine an Art without reference to some kind of 'transaction', not only with reference to the visual arts but also to literature. 'All writers know', wrote Leslie Fiedler, '... that literature, the literary work, remains incomplete until it has passed from the desk to the marketplace.'<sup>17</sup> This idea is echoed in Lawrence Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism*, where he shows that both 'high' modernist works and works of popular culture depend on, and emerge from, existing commercial institutions and structures. It is evident that Bourdieu's analysis of the field as a complex set of interrelated cultural positions vigorously underpins, implicitly and explicitly, many of the arguments laid out in a whole body of recent critical work, many of which are cited throughout this thesis.

Further than this, the idea of 'commerce' has been used in a much wider sense. It has been used here to unify and illuminate the intricate relationship that a magazine has with its cultural moment, and summarised below are the ways in which each magazine incorporates a different idea of 'commerce'. For this I have drawn from time to time on the terminology and ideas in certain key works, again particularly Bourdieu's *Field of Cultural Production*. Subsequently the idea is raised in this conclusion that each magazine attempts to 'sell' its own idea of the new – in some cases by making it palatable to those who are attached to establishment ideas, in others by presenting it starkly and with intent to shock, but at the same time gratifying its editors' certain acknowledgement that, in a world of modernity, new artistic forms are required as a response. Also briefly addressed are some of the more general issues raised by this thesis, and continue to suggest in the course of the discussion where it might fit within the body of existing contemporary critical studies of periodicals.

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<sup>16</sup> Hans Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Fiedler, *What Was Literature?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 24.

## The Seven Arts

The chapter on *The Seven Arts* explored the idea of the magazine as a conduit for ‘commerce’ between past, present, and future. One of the more important aspects of what has become known as twentieth-century modernism is the idea of the incorporation of the past, particularly in the eyes of iconic representatives of modern form such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce. Pound’s acknowledgement of the ‘commerce between’ himself and Walt Whitman implies not only Pound’s opinion of Whitman’s significance as an American poet, but also acknowledges Whitman’s (reluctantly admitted) influence on Pound himself. *The Seven Arts* incorporated the influence of the past in many ways – some acknowledged, some merely assumed. It also promoted the immediate present – contemporary culture in the form of art, music, literature, cultural comment, philosophical values, industrial developments. Further, its programme was to include the future, looking towards the creation of a uniquely American culture which, it acknowledged, was still to come.

*The Seven Arts’* concern with the past is indisputable: it rejected the immediate past (in the form of the ‘genteel’ culture of late Victorian America) for a longer-term past which included the heritage of classical Europe. The early issues of the magazine state its dedication to a new future for America, but the rhetoric of its revival call employed figures of classical antiquity: Whitman (himself, according to some critics, a Romantic) was designated the ‘Homer’ of America. The magazine’s cover design referred to ancient texts. The language and rhetoric used also reflected the language of the hymnal, prayer, and bible: the same language which influenced that of the Declaration of Independence which itself also makes use of the anaphora prevalent in Greek drama. All this consolidates the patriotic tenor of a magazine which paradoxically displayed a passionate concern for America while enumerating everything that appeared, to its writers, detrimental to the arts in American society. The magazine conversed with the recent past philosophically as well as linguistically; its expression often evoked the highly specialised educational background of its authors. As shown in chapter 1 of this thesis, besides Whitman (at that time at the height of his posthumous critical glorification), and the more contemporary pragmatism of Dewey, one can trace Nietzsche, Santayana, Royce, William James, Poe, and De Tocqueville in the essays of Frank, Bourne, Brooks, and Oppenheim.

The magazine's commerce with the present, with contemporary concerns and ideas, was one of its declared editorial targets. It related closely to the surrounding immediate political situation: its character changed after America's War declaration, and it became more strident and absolute in its political commentary, particularly when Randolph Bourne's written support of pacifism was no longer acceptable to the wider circulation *New Republic*. It is probable that this was a financial, as well as an ethical, exclusion by the producers and editors of *The New Republic*, hoping to maintain their magazine of opinion through the war. Aside from that, *The Seven Arts* is concerned with the conditions and productions of its time in the form of new music, art, technology, and literature in particular, and 'adolescent America' in general. It also addresses, though briefly, the new art of film.<sup>18</sup> It emphasised the present, too, in its repeated ideas of 'youth', following Bourne's *Youth and Life*.

But *The Seven Arts*, at least to begin with, also engaged as much as possible with the future which (before the war) they were sure was in store for America, the 'American Renaissance', a culture which would grow from American soil. Its strongly-expressed organicism, the growth of new art from experiential roots, can be seen to have contributed, in part, to the American modernism of the 1920s and to the American 'regionalist' movement of the 1930s, typified by the art of Thomas Hart Benton and the collection of 'folk humour' by the historian Constance Rourke. *The Seven Arts'* optimism subsided into a deep post-war intellectual pessimism which culminated in *Civilization in the United States*, an extraordinary collection of essays published in 1921 by Harold Stearns in which thirty writers expressed a great deal that they felt was wrong with American culture. Included in the list of contributors to that volume were leading *Seven Arts* writer Van Wyck Brooks and *Seven Arts* contributors Joel Spingarn, H. L. Mencken, and historian Lewis Mumford. It is perhaps no coincidence that immediately after the publication of this work its editor, journalist Harold Stearns, emigrated to Paris, as did a number of other disaffected American 'exiles'<sup>19</sup>. Threaded through *The Seven Arts* is an urgent need to communicate – to engage in commerce

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<sup>18</sup> Exceptional, and scarce, works of American film criticism of the time include Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (New York: MacMillan, 1915, revised 1922), and Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1916).

<sup>19</sup> See Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* [1934] (London: Penguin, 1991), especially chapters 2-6, for the classic narrative of the American 'lost generation'.

with past glories as well as with future creations, to interchange American ideas with European ideals resulting in that ‘emerging’ new Americanism. Thus *The Seven Arts* addresses and incorporates the new with the ancient through setting up a ‘commerce between’ them. But it is also centrally concerned with ‘commerce’ in the more usual sense of the word. Its writers, particularly Brooks, were of the opinion that the artistic and intellectual culture of America was dissipated by its business interests: the materialism of American society required the commercial ‘success’ of any idealistic graduate, and it was therefore impossible to combine the two. This fundamental separation between art and commerce, which *The Seven Arts* writers saw as the embodiment of so much of what was wrong with American culture, was also addressed, or assumed, by the next two magazines with which this thesis has been concerned, *291* and *The Soil*. It was significant enough to be the cause of a division between the producer and the editor of *291*. It was also an important enough distinction for Robert Coady to have tried to address it through the theoretical incorporation of the products of commercial growth and commercial activity into the general framework of ‘American Art’. There was also considerable rivalry and public disagreement between the editors of *291* and Coady, shown here to have been played out in *The Soil*, which was published immediately subsequently.

## 291

Alfred Stieglitz spent a great deal of his professional time denying that any relationship could exist between art and commerce, and the professional rift between him and De Zayas following the year’s production of *291* was one result. De Zayas opened the Modern Gallery during the time that *291* was produced; essentially it was a conventionally-operated gallery which took commission on the sale of artists’ work. Abbing’s phrase describing the ‘denial and simultaneous embrace’ of commerce follows Bourdieu, within whose schema it can be shown that it is impossible to extricate art, and artistic values, from its dependency on the activity of commerce, the one field lying within the bounds of the other. Further, in the ‘economic world reversed’, the ‘value’ of art depends on the belief that it was produced without any economic motive, but produces, in time, economic value as an investment, as did the

bound limited editions on vellum of books such as *Ulysses*.<sup>20</sup> It follows from this that it could be viewed as contradictory to take Stieglitz's position, to be concerned about obtaining services like binding, which adds value to a book as a material object, more cheaply while professing a disinterest in money. Stieglitz's ideas on 'quality' were commensurate with those of an art world which invested, and still invests, in long-term values. Clearly Stieglitz would like to have sold more issues of *291*, as is evidenced by his having 'advertised' all its issues as a portfolio in *Camera Work* after it had ceased publication, in an attempt to recuperate a little of his investment.

Like the other magazines in this thesis, as well as posing explicit questions about the nature of the art-commerce relationship, *291* addressed the idea of 'commerce' directly. Whether or not any of the four were indifferent to their sales all of them expressed explicit opinions on the nature of commercial activity. While *The Seven Arts* elaborated on the dichotomy, as elucidated by Brooks, *291* included, among its comparatively few pages of written commentary, ambiguous paragraphs entitled 'Values in Art' and 'Economic Laws and Art' which look satirical in intent, but at the same time appear also to have sought gallery publicity.<sup>21</sup> *The Soil*, on the other hand, expressed approval of almost everything commercial — but with some constraints.

### The Soil

After *291*, *The Soil* has appeared, to some critics, to be a welcome relief from the uncompromising severity of the highbrow. Its editor, Robert Coady, condemned all kinds of 'ism' and 'ismism', as indeed did *291*, but with an entirely different result. While *291*'s stance was that art is about the individual and not the collective mind, an 'ism' would automatically imply the contrary. Thus *291* would hope, in the nature of progress towards a new kind of art, that an artist would produce work which was largely unclassifiable. Coady's stance against 'isms' was against what he saw as the pretensions of the 'art world'. He also objected to what he viewed as artists jumping on the bandwagon — 'Gleizes has Metzgingitis' he wrote in a *Soil* review.<sup>22</sup> At the same

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<sup>20</sup> See note on Rainey, p. 106.

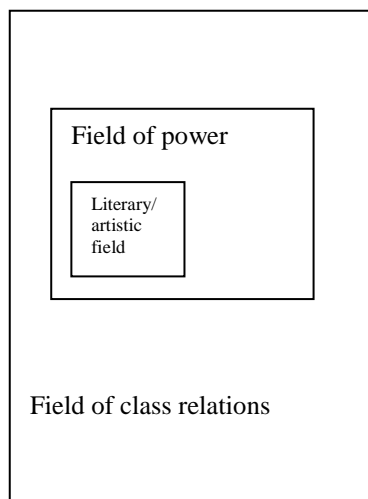
<sup>21</sup> See chapter 2, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Coady, R. J. Coady, 'The Indeps', *The Soil* 1.5 (July 1917), p. 207.

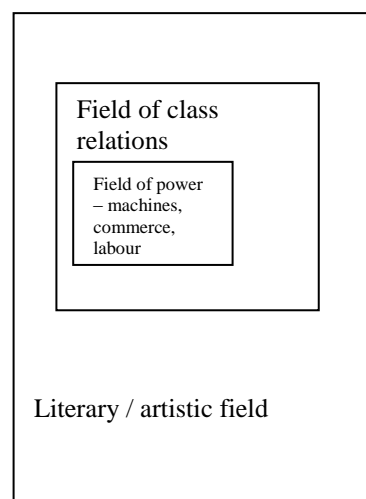


time Coady was as much a member of ‘the art world’ as were the producers of *291*, owning at the time an art gallery in which contemporary, sometimes local, work was sold on a small scale. His magazine initially looks like a promotion of popular, commercially successful art, in that it includes articles about celebrities and about sporting heroes. But the celebrities become ‘art’: swimming champions and comedians become objects of visual attention and sports reports become poetry. In the context of the accompanying articles, each one is a thing of largely conventional beauty. Thus, in direct contradiction to *291*’s position, Coady’s aesthetic appears to be almost that of the Victorian Romantic, where Beauty exists independently as an ideal to be striven towards, ‘given by God.’<sup>23</sup> Coady also seeks to judge what is normally ‘outside’ the accepted field of elitist or specialist culture by the criteria of that culture, in an inversion of Bourdieu’s schematic position. As shown in his diagram, reproduced here, Bourdieu would place the art field (a detailed example of which he also charts, as mentioned in my Introduction) within the larger framework of a power struggle which is itself contained within a field delineated by the struggle for class domination. Coady however would theoretically wish to call ‘art’ those industrial artifacts which belong in the field of power:

Bourdieu’s analysis:<sup>24</sup>



Coady’s attempted placement:



<sup>23</sup> John Ruskin, *A Joy For Ever: The Two Paths* (London: George Allen and Sons, 1907), p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), p. 46.

The idea of including the instruments of commercial society *inside* a field which describes a set of art objects which can only, logically, arise within that field, must be paradoxical. Everything, as we saw William Carlos Williams write in *The Poetry Journal*, cannot be art.<sup>25</sup> Such an inclusive definition, as John Quinn had also written to Coady a year before, ‘would be no definition at all’.<sup>26</sup> To enable meaningful discourse, Art must be considered as something separate from the products of industrial life, whether or not its inception is dependent on the same industrial system. In fact, it was understood by his colleagues that Coady did not value these items in the same way as he valued what was essentially, by then, ‘establishment’ art; he did not hesitate to disparage experimental work other than that of Picasso. Santayana’s popular treatise *The Sense of Beauty* (1896), for example, finally concluded ‘beauty is an experience; there is nothing more to say about it’, and Coady’s aesthetic appears to echo this.<sup>27</sup> Thus while several critics have praised *The Soil* for its homage to popular culture they fail to note that popular culture was praised already by many publications in which popular figures like Charlie Chaplin and Battling Joe Levinsky were very adequately represented, and the ivory-tower art establishment were perhaps among the last to appreciate them.

Art, in *The Soil*, was the Art World and then everything else that went to make up American urban industrial living, including tug boats on the East River, the Matt Shay steam engine, and the Gary project for the settlement of industrial workers in their place of occupation.<sup>28</sup> *The Soil* ran for five issues and the fifth issue (though unlike the one in Cowley’s succinct description, it did appear) is decidedly inferior to the first in planning, content, and physical quality.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless the organicism evident in Coady’s original editorial, the idea of a new America growing up naturally and ‘healthily’ without European taint, and of course *The Soil*’s title, place it in a key position in the development of American modernism. The machine aesthetic in *The*

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<sup>25</sup> See quotation from Williams in chapter 3, p. 127.

<sup>26</sup> John Quinn, letter to Robert Coady, 25 March 1916, New York Public Library, John Quinn Memorial Collection, box 7. See Chapter 3, page 142.

<sup>27</sup> George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty: Being the Outlines of Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896), p. 268.

<sup>28</sup> See Randolph Bourne, Abraham Flexner, and Frank P. Bachman, *The Gary Schools* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970), ed. Adeline and Murray Levine.

<sup>29</sup> I refer to Cowley’s description of little magazines in *Exile’s Return* (see Introduction herein, p. 26).

*Soil*, though oddly manifested, is significant too. Coady might have wished to point out the beauty inherent in the interrelationship of form to function in his photographs of huge machines. Nevertheless, we saw in the *Soil* chapter how the language of his published articles, where it relates to the mechanical, becomes the language of an aesthetic indebted to a European, perhaps Platonic, heritage which Coady professed to disown.

Whitman's extensive organicist, biological tropes, evident in *Leaves of Grass* and *Drum Taps*, clearly influenced the rhetoric of Oppenheim and Coady, Wallace Stevens in *The Soil* and, unexpectedly, President Woodrow Wilson, as noted in Chapter 1. Organicism functions as a major device in the work of American poets Aiken, Crane, Moore, Stevens, and Williams (to name but a few), and, in a different way, the Eliot of *Prufrock* and *The Waste Land*. *The Soil* is sometimes associated with *The Seven Arts* because of its editorial emphasis on Whitman, and because of certain similarities to Whitman's style and sentiment in the poetic paeans of Oppenheim in *The Seven Arts* and Cravan and Coady in *The Soil*. Though the immediacy of Coady's expansive list of existing urban features is slightly different from Cravan's excited urge towards city immigration contained in the line 'New York! New York! I should like to inhabit you!', both are also derived from Whitman. Coady was entirely comfortable with the products of commerce and industry and with the idea that these had somehow 'grown' from American soil. Apart from a generalised democratic and patriotic rhetoric, however, there is little in *The Soil* to suggest that he had any deep interest in the plight of the American proletariat, or much abiding interest in government politics or social theory. For this one might turn to the fourth magazine in this group, *The Pagan*.

### The Pagan

Like *291* and *The Soil*, *The Pagan* was the product of a commercial enterprise, in this case a book shop which also sold original art and prints. The fact distinguishes these magazines from publications like *Others* and *The Little Review* (which ostensibly existed only to publish good art) and has, as I hope to have shown, a stronger bearing on their composition and content than has previously been allowed. While Coady had already moved his gallery from Washington Square to the more up-market Fifth

Avenue, Joseph Kling maintained book shops in Washington Square or Greenwich Village for most of his life. It is possible to read both *The Soil* and *291* as advertisements for their own sites of production; this motive was less obvious in *The Pagan*, though it advertised its own books and anthologies in most issues. It displayed a general interest in literature and the arts and a particular interest in Yiddish literature.

Its published art was for the most part of the naturalist, ‘ash-can’ type. That a large number of its artists were immigrant Jews might either have been intentional or circumstantial; Ezra Mendelsohn has noted the large number of Jewish artists whose home had been in the Lower East Side Community, and their almost universally left-wing convictions.<sup>30</sup> Certain of these, particularly Louis Lozowick and Hugo Gellert, were associated with the founding of the New York City John Reed Club in 1929, and the hard-line Stalinist American left wing of the early 1930s.<sup>31</sup> We cannot however discount the importance of *The Pagan* among the raft of early Modernist periodicals in New York. Arguably Joseph Kling was more, rather than less, aware of the life of the city than were his more ‘fashionable’ counterparts. The generous subsidies available to *The Seven Arts* and *291*, and the independent finance of *The Soil*, were clearly not available to the editor of *The Pagan*, who appears to have financed his own magazine. There are no records of subscribers to *The Pagan* and no letters seem to remain either to or from Joseph Kling with regard to its circulation. But he was acutely aware of the Modern, of modern life and modern injustice; aware of the paradox of ‘bohemian’ or salon socialism; aware of the inhumanity of war; aware of the poverty of the majority. Though his aesthetics were not ‘experimental’, his magazine existed to promote the intellectual value of contemporary literature and art in America. And, accompanying adverts for Pagan book sales in each issue, there is almost always a full-page advertisement for a nearby department store selling modern life via Victrola gramophones.

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<sup>30</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn, ‘Jews, Communism, and Art in Inter-War America’, in *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism* ed. Jonathan Frankel and Dan Diner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> See Roy Kotynek and John Cohassey, *American Cultural Rebels: Avant-Garde and Bohemian Artist, Writers and Musicians from the 1850s through the 1960s* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2008), pp. 138-139.

Moving thus, a little indirectly, to the ‘denial and simultaneous embrace’ of the commercial, it appears from all of the above that this dichotomy actually shapes and determines much of the output of *The Seven Arts*, *The Soil*, and *291*. North’s ‘even ... the commercial’ (chapter 3) seems tentative in the light of the absolute inextricability of commerce, in the form of the accumulation of capital, from the general make-up of all these magazines. *The Pagan* is in a slightly different position, in that its radicalism is against capitalism not because it suffocates Art but because it suffocates and damages those people whom capitalism employs to further its profits. Nevertheless, chapter 4 showed that it also clearly employed the idea that art must always be a matter of individual taste. Although this has been shown to be in accordance with the anarchist principles which underlay *The Pagan*’s editorial comment, it is an idea which does not take into account the social circumstances surrounding the prior formation of such ‘individual’ taste, and the prior accumulation of social capital. Abbing’s work, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, refers primarily to Fine Art; within the body of these magazines the tenacity of the idea is evident not only in the field of Fine Art but all art.

The magazines have in common a positive relation with that which they understand to be new, and in fact a common insistence on change. They offer a variety of descriptions of both existing and approaching change and a variety of ways to go forward, take advantage, seize the day. The following section documents this approach, often intentionally using the language of trade, as three of the magazines functioned partly as trading outlets. The fourth, *The Seven Arts*, with its extraordinary rhetoric, was at least evangelising. None of the magazines was content with the current status of American arts and letters: all of them, however, define the new in different terms.

### *Conclusion: Selling the New*

The most important idea in advertising is ‘new’. It creates an itch. You simply put your product in there as a kind of calamine lotion.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Matthew Weiner, *Mad Men* series 2 ep.13, Lionsgate Television, 2008.

The ‘itch’ for newness is widely understood to be one of the defining features of twentieth-century modernism; an urge to differentiate from one’s intellectual and artistic peers and to build on the past to create for the future. Besides being a unique channel for ideas which were already in circulation, each magazine discussed here was eager to promote new ideas, new art, new literature, new ways of looking at, or representing, a new world, the New World. I have begun to demonstrate, through this examination of four very different periodicals, how the idea of commerce was fully interlaced with the ideas of the new. What else, then, can be extrapolated from this study which would contribute to an increased understanding of the new, the modern, or the Modernist?<sup>33</sup> How did each magazine supply the response to an itch, and which itch? This question could be restated in commercial terms: from where did each magazine derive its market niche? Or if (as Bourdieu argues) each and every cultural product is uniquely a product of a struggle for position in an enormously complex and constantly shifting cultural moment, what unique features of the American intellectual ‘landscape’ of the 1910s led to each magazine’s occurrence, and further how does it function as a cultural formation?<sup>34</sup> Commerce is discussed and incorporated within the magazines as both a practical and a theoretical concept; according to their four different interpretations commerce and the circulation and obtaining of money are, successively, that which cannot be art (*The Seven Arts*), a form of art (*The Soil*), the antithesis of art (*291*), or simply the means of subduing and retaining those humans who are merely its drudges and implements rather than the recipients of its fruits (*The Pagan*). For each periodical there is an explicit set of circumstances, a nexus of stimuli which nurtures its inception and to which it reacts.

The idea expressed so well by Matthew Weiner’s character Don Draper is not merely used as a metaphor here. As stated in the Introduction, there is a growing body of

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<sup>33</sup> For a very comprehensive examination of the cultural appeal of newness and materiality in modernism and the new ‘in the open domain of mass society’ see Peter Brooker, “‘Newness’ in Modernisms, Early and Late”, in Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, ed., *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Vol. 2: North America* (Oxford: OUP forthcoming volume, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> The idea of a ‘cultural formation’ is appropriated from Raymond Williams’ *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981), especially Chapter 3, ‘Formations’, pp. 59-86, as a useful description of the constitution of a magazine; clearly it has lent itself to endless interpretation and re-interpretation. See for example Francis Mulhern, ‘Culture and Society, Then and Now’ in *New Left Review* 55 (January-February 2009) for a 50th anniversary re-evaluation, and and Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, eds., *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Vol. 1: Britain and Ireland 1880-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

critical work which explores the idea of modernism as business, and its authors and editors as promoters of that business. Even if the periodicals here were, as they may have protested, unmotivated by financial gain, they at least invested in cultural capital. Also, because they acknowledged the positive importance of that which was new, they may be called Modernist. This is not the hitherto academically-curtailed sense of 'Modernist' which (in literature and art) denotes particular style attributes and particular principles, or even the more general sense in which the description 'modernist' is used almost interchangeably with 'avant-garde', but a wider historical sense close to that delineated by Matei Calinescu in *Five Faces of Modernity*, designating 'a larger contemporary movement of aesthetic renovation'.<sup>35</sup> In the course of his exposition Calinescu goes on to examine some examples of the use of the term in the English-speaking world, naming James Waldo Fawcett's magazine *The Modernist* (which actually appears to consist of one issue only, or there is at least only one extant issue, published in 1919).<sup>36</sup> It is, then, the idea of artistic modernity as a positive creative stimulus, an 'itch', which is important. A key phrase in the 'manifesto' of *The Modernist*, as an example, 'The modernist will strive to be an expression of our own time and our own work' is comparable to that of *The Seven Arts* three years before: to produce 'an expression of our American arts which shall be fundamentally an expression of our American life'; an American life which, however, was clearly driven by expanding commercial production.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the fact that minority circulation magazines have come to be associated with modernism, early uses of the word 'modernist' are also recorded, and were possibly more influential and pervasive, in various mainstream, large-circulation, American journals. As early as 1914, the American magazine *Arts and Decoration* published an article called 'The Modernist School of Interior Decoration'; thus it seems that the word was used to describe art slightly earlier than it was used to describe literature. An article describing the innovative nature of Bach's music in *Musical Quarterly* for

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<sup>35</sup> Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 69-70.

<sup>36</sup> *The Modernist: A Monthly Magazine of Arts and Letters*, ed. James Waldo Fawcett, 1.1 (November 1919). Calinescu refers to the first issue – I have not been able to trace any more than one ever published. A Kraus reprint was issued in 1967. Hoffman [256] notes 'issues later than November 1919 not consulted'.

<sup>37</sup> James Waldo Fawcett, editorial, *The Modernist* 1.1 (November 1919), p.1; James Oppenheim, editorial, *The Seven Arts* 1.1 (November 1916), p.53.

1916 is entitled ‘Sebastian Bach, Modernist’. *Vanity Fair*, using the word to signify the importance of the new, wrote in 1916, of ‘Hats Having Modernist Tendencies’.<sup>38</sup> *The Seven Arts* itself refers to the art of Max Weber as ‘Modernism’.<sup>39</sup> In 1923 *Vanity Fair* published four poems by E. E. Cummings [*sic*] under the title ‘Four Modernist Sonnets’. While Michael Murphy’s exposition of *Vanity Fair* primarily concerns its knowing commodification of modernist ideas, the magazine was also intentionally innovative.<sup>40</sup> But *Vanity Fair*’s use of the term is made palatable for more conventional readers within a mainstream context. The idea of a ‘modernist’ hat, for instance, appealed to an informed reader who might have seen some heteroglossic irony in the juxtaposition of fashion items and high art jargon. Further, the surrounding material in *Vanity Fair* would delineate a particular social context and a particular economic context (‘Lessons Taught By the Motor Show’, ‘This Year’s Dog Show At the Garden’, ‘Marriage Trials and Trial Marriage’, ‘Ornstein and Futurist Music’, ‘A New Opera for the Metropolitan’).<sup>41</sup> Part of the difference between *Vanity Fair*’s intentional marketing of ‘modernism’ to a mainstream audience and *291*’s embrace of modernism as an essential indicator of artistic progress is exactly that of market penetration. Crowninshield, of *Vanity Fair*, recognised the itch for the new but presented it without the shock of the new, retaining a large market share in a particular readership. *The Soil* and *291* recognised the itch and answered with a shock, acceptable to a select few, possibly a subset of *Vanity Fair* readers. *The Pagan* and *The Seven Arts* responded to new social conditions more than to new criteria for artistic judgement, but each offer a different recipe for the present and the immediate future. The periodicals discussed here were not perhaps offering a ‘panacea’ in the sense of a soother, but more in the sense of presenting a body of work which went some way towards representing their particular interpretation of modern life.

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<sup>38</sup> Philip Greeley Clapp, ‘Sebastian Bach, Modernist’, *Musical Quarterly* 2 (1916), pp. 295-313; ‘Hats Having Modernist Tendencies’, clothes section, *Vanity Fair* 5.6 (February 1916), p. 96; E. E. Cummings, ‘Four Modernist Sonnets’, *Vanity Fair* 21.4 (December 1923), p. 60.

<sup>39</sup> Horace Holley, ‘Max Weber’s Book’, *The Seven Arts* ‘Chronicles’, *The Seven Arts* 2.1 (May 1917), p. 129. This is particularly interesting in the light of Weber’s association with Coady, who, as is argued here, is not necessarily ‘modernist’ in his appreciation of art work but perhaps in his appreciation of the modernity of society.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Murphy, “‘One Hundred Per Cent Bohemia’: Pop Decadence and the Aestheticization of Commodity in the Rise of the Slicks’, *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, and Rereading*, ed. Kevin Dettmar and Stephen Watt (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 38-61.

<sup>41</sup> Selected contents from *Vanity Fair* 5.6 (February 1916) noted from Chadwyck-Healy Periodicals Index Online (accessed 5 September 2009).



Nevertheless they identify new products and also offer some kind of justification for these.

There were, as indicated, a number of industrial circumstances which over the preceding thirty years had made it easier for a periodical to be produced rapidly to respond to an immediate perceived cultural need, and the effects are well-documented in the works of textual critics such as Bornstein and McGann.<sup>42</sup> The comparative cheapness and choice of paper and mechanical printing presses, was clearly a factor in the increase in magazine and periodical production in the late 1880s and beyond. That said, there was an enormous variety in the physical durability of these publications, though the small individual periodicals were, on the whole, less destructible than rapidly-produced weeklies like *Pearson's*, of which the extant copies are sometimes so fragile as to be unreadable and in peril, on handling, of total disintegration.

Another feature affecting the production of all periodicals was urban geography, and in all the four magazines discussed here, geographical positioning was crucial. It is well-known that the New York of 1915-1917 was a compelling centre for a high proportion of America's educated class. The many accounts of Greenwich Village 'bohemia' attest to this, though it is also true to say that by that time it was becoming the 'One Hundred Per Cent Bohemia' both parodied and promoted in *Vanity Fair* in 1919. This was sometimes exploited by cultural entrepreneurs such as Guido Bruno, whose many rather self-consciously 'avant-garde' papers and rent-a-view garret helped to encourage urban 'tourists' eager to partake of a slice of bohemian life before returning to the suburbs.<sup>43</sup> Chicago was also central – it spawned *Poetry* and *The*

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<sup>42</sup> George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Robert Scholes, *The Paradox of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Illinois: Illinois University Press, 1958) and also Churchill and McKible's 'Modernism in Magazines' which summarises and cites a number of these works (Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible, 'Modernism in Magazines', *A Handbook of Modernism* ed. Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gasiorek, Deborah Longworth and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Michael Murphy, "'One Hundred Per Cent Bohemia': Pop Decadence and the Aestheticization of Commodity in the Rise of the Slicks', in Kevin Dettmar and Stephen Watt, *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, and Rereading* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 38-61. For details of Guido Bruno's 'marketing' of Bohemia See Stephen Rogers, 'Bruno's Magazines, 1915-1922' in Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, ed., *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of*

*Little Review*, and was the birthplace of Sherwood Anderson – but Margaret Anderson brought *The Little Review* to New York on the general assumption that it was more conducive to progressive ideas : ‘it was time to touch the greatest city of America.’<sup>44</sup> Djuna Barnes’ short account, *Greenwich Village As It Is* (1915) was perhaps already somewhat idealised and even nostalgic.<sup>45</sup> But of the four magazines which are the subject of this thesis, the one which was produced the closest to the Greenwich Village geographical area, *The Pagan*, is the one which reacts most strongly to bohemian pretension. The two art magazines, on the other hand, were products of Fifth Avenue, just two miles further north, and thus took their place among the profusion of small art galleries and individual art dealers in close proximity, as representations of the *ambience* of two particular galleries. *The Seven Arts*’ site of production was to be found closer to what was the newspaper and publishing area of New York. These material and geographical circumstances, then, are part of the unique position-taking constituted by each of the magazines. The generally-recognised international trend towards modernism during the era is of course much larger and more complex; it has been discussed, dissected, refracted and restated many times in a number of different disciplines, and may be assumed to stand as a background to this whole discussion.

One of the circumstances of modernity for these magazines was the constitution of their readership, which in the absence of many subscription records we can only guess at but which was targeted, at least, by the nature and direction of the advertising in each periodical. It was no doubt narrow, anticipated advertising by companies expecting to sell skiing holidays, suburban living, private (though radical and experimental) schooling, esoteric religion, works of art, large supplies of books, other magazines, phonograph machines, and designer clothes – urban, or even suburban, indicators of relative prosperity. True, *The Pagan* aimed to highlight social inequalities, as did *The Seven Arts*’ short fiction, but it is possible that they did not see their position as messengers of consumerism as any more anomalous than does *The Observer Magazine* today, might position an article on famine in Eritrea between an

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*Modernist Magazines, Vol. 2: North America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press forthcoming volume, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years’ War* (London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), p. 136.

<sup>45</sup> Djuna Barnes, *Greenwich Village As It Is* (New York: Phoenix Bookshop, 1978), first published in *Pearson’s Magazine* in 1915.

advertisement for a high-end four-by-four and instructions on how to obtain and cook an elegant, five-course, minimalist banquet. In relation to readership class, I have also argued elsewhere that *The Soil* and *The Seven Arts*, rather than breaking down cultural barriers, drew attention to hierarchies of taste and helped to quantify and delineate them.<sup>46</sup>

*The Seven Arts*, although its original stated intent was to promote new American writing, is now remembered primarily for its promotion of American cultural ideals. By the beginning of the more pessimistic, depression-hit 1930s, James Oppenheim judged the whole idea of American artistic regeneration to be unrealistic, though even in 1916 he admitted his motives had not been quite ‘pure’, and it is, in the end, *The Dial* of the 1920s and not *The Seven Arts* which has become accepted as the pre-eminent arts magazine of the American modernist period.<sup>47</sup> *The Seven Arts* is remembered, in the words of Casey Nelson Blake, as ‘an icon of the *promise* of American culture’, and for its response to the perceived entrenched ‘fatal division between theory and practice in American society’. It responded directly, too, to the immediate conditions of war.<sup>48</sup> In chapter 1, I explored some of its links to past traditions and its hopes for future progress, which make it a fertile source of information about what was, maybe, an intellectual present viewed through rose-coloured glasses. Of the four, it most clearly elucidates the aesthetic idealism, the emphasis on modern ‘emerging’ American cultural production which was so much a part of the intellectual tenor of these pre-War years.

Both *291* and *The Soil* performed the extra function of filling a straightforwardly commercial market niche as well as a cultural one: they acted as sales briefs for art galleries, responding to the competition of the recently expanded set of small private galleries in New York. Chapter 2 suggests that *The Soil* was responding to its own commercial need as a gallery advertisement, but also acted as a vehicle for Coady’s own contentiousness, a contentiousness which itself might well also have been useful as a market strategy. Both magazines were thus addressing elites, or the same elite, of

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<sup>46</sup> Victoria Kingham, ‘The Middle Brow, The Middle Class, and Modernist Magazines in America’, in *Middlebrow Matters: Cultural Hierarchy and Literary Value* (Palgrave Press, forthcoming publication, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 1 herein, p. 44.

<sup>48</sup> Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community*, 122.

their own choosing. I use this word in its broad meaning and not necessarily pejoratively – after all, as Robert Hughes points out, all fields of activity have their elite; it would be difficult to find more elite selections than the England Football Team, the contenders for the World Chess Championship, or the professional team in *Strictly Come Dancing*.

In the context of historical modernism, we could usefully look again at *The Soil*'s editorial on American art to see how its intentions might inform its ultimate position in the modernist field. Having pointed out that there is a logical difficulty involved in placing it into any broad art-sociological model such as that of Bourdieu, it might be more appropriate to attempt to examine the idea that Coady's views presage a broader, populist modernity. His view, we remember, is expressed this way:

The Panama Canal, the Sky-scraper and Colonial Architecture. The East River, the Battery and the "Fish Theatre." The Tug Boat and the Steam-shovel. The Steam Lighter. The Steel Plants, the Washing Plants and the Electrical Shops. The Bridges, the Docks, the Cutouts, the Viaducts, the "Matt M. Shay" and the "3000". Gary. The Polarine and the Portland Cement Works. Wright's and Curtiss's Aeroplanes and the Aeronauts. The Sail Boats, the Ore Cars. Indian Beadwork, Sculptures, Decorations, Music and Dances. Jack Johnson, Charlie Chaplin, and "Spike" in "The Girl in the Game". Annette Kellermann, "Neptune's Daughter." Bert. Williams, Rag-time, the Buck and Wing and the Clog. Syncopation and the Cake-Walk [...] This is American Art.

The paragraph constitutes a direct response to its immediate conditions of urban modernity. I digress here slightly to compare it with a statement by one of the more significant pop artists of the 1960s, Claes Oldenburg, about his own aesthetic, fifty years later:

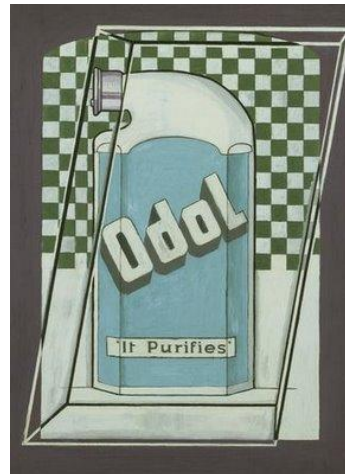
I am for Kool-Art, 7-UP art, Pepsi-art, Sunshine art, 39 cents art, Vam art, Menthol art ... I am for U. S. Government Inspected Art, Grade A art, Regular Price art, Yellow Ripe art, Extra Fancy art, Ready-to-eat art ...<sup>49</sup>

There is a subtle, but fundamental difference between these two points of view. While for Coady art *is* modern urban American life, for Oldenburg urban brand-names and descriptors become *incorporated* into how he wishes his art to function. As Hughes points out, Oldenburg was a 'highly formal' artist who took account of the classical tradition and supplied an alternative, but still specialist, 'tradition', (or again

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Robert Hughes, *The Shock of The New: Art and the Century of Change* (London: Thames and Hudson [updated and enlarged edition], 1991), p. 357.

to use Bourdieu's term, a unique field of cultural production), in a process which Hughes calls 'the recomplication of an ordinary thing back into an image.'<sup>50</sup> Oldenburg's statement, unlike Coady's, does not posit a world in which the term 'art' is applied to ephemeral facets of modern life, but one in which characteristic marketing *descriptors* can be applied to them. While Coady attempted a direct response, therefore, Oldenburg's giant steel clothes peg and enamelled hamburgers are frozen commodifications which incorporate that response. They retain a similar relationship to the world of consumer goods (in terms of Bourdieu's fields of power and class relations) as do Picabia's 291 'portraits' of Paul Haviland as an electric light and Alfred Stieglitz as a broken camera. And although Oldenburg wished his art to do other than reside in a museum, it is, inevitably, exhibited predominantly in museums and galleries like the work of any other publicly-recognised artist. The similarity of *verbal* expression by both artists is unmistakeable, however, and unmistakeably redolent of Whitman's verse. For a real precursor to Oldenburg, Warhol, and the subsequent range of American, ironic, commodity-inspired pop art we must look, not to Coady, but just a little forward to 1921 and 1924, to Stuart Davis' remarkable series of commodity paintings which included 'Lucky Strike' and 'Odol':



Robert Coady died in 1921, and there is no way of knowing how he would have received these, or whether he could have foreseen exactly how the American modern and postmodern art tradition, ultimately acknowledging with irony the commercial

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<sup>50</sup> Hughes, *ibid.*, p. 359.

nature of American existence, would eventually manifest itself. Davis' pictures perhaps anticipate the later irony, but Coady's ideas are idealistic rather than ironic.<sup>51</sup>

His market niche, though, remained a literal one - a small gallery-curator, of some socially-approved standing, promoting an angle on art to an educationally specialised audience. Although his magazine was innovative within this narrow *milieu* it is, as I demonstrated, neither quite as original nor quite as radical as it first appears. The idea of exhibiting the art of children, for instance, originated with Stieglitz in "291" and not with Coady.<sup>52</sup> Coady's suggestion of a new kind of American art was his own positive reaction to the itch of American urban industrialisation, now recognized as a key stimulus to the modernist response.

In several ways, *291* was the most culturally prescient of the four magazines I have included here, despite its very small audience at the time. It fulfilled at least one aspect of Alfred Stieglitz's permanent quest for America to recognise new art – "291" is always experimenting' – whether or not it fulfilled its function as an advertisement for De Zayas' Modern Gallery. European painting was undergoing extraordinary and fertile development at the time; after the impact of the post-impressionists, the Armory Show changed the direction of American art and, importantly, American art-buying. *291* itself, though, owes its immediate genesis to "291" the gallery, and the determination of Alfred Stieglitz (after about 1910) to make America aware of art which he perceived as indicative of new, twentieth-century, concepts. *291* reached, however, only a small number of readers and in specifying the characteristics of art forms which were, to its editors, the essential new, was perhaps in the position of preaching only to the converted.

Nevertheless it is important to remember that despite this tiny readership *291* was part of an art movement which determined the direction of a great deal of modern American art for the rest of the twentieth century. I have already mentioned Stuart Davis as being consistently at the leading edge of new painting in the US and, like

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<sup>51</sup> Images from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, <http://tinyurl.com/yabv4vk> (accessed 21 November 2009).

<sup>52</sup> *Camera Work* 48 (October 1916), p. 5, lists as a recent show a 'third exhibition of children's drawings'.

Picabia and De Zayas, acknowledging commercial American products in his paintings as early as 1921. This consistently productive artist, a member of The Eight, also illustrated *The Masses* and had art reproduced in *The Pagan*. One might therefore infer a direct artistic lineage through from Henri and Sloan through Davis via Picabia to Warhol and Oldenburg, an established tradition of the reification of the products of American commerce, combining the various aspects of the new which were promoted by the magazines in question: the unique American new of *The Seven Arts*, the commercial preoccupation of *The Soil*, the experimental combinations in *291* of the mechanical and the psychological, and the contemporary American naturalism of the Eight as extensively illustrated in *The Pagan*.

*The Pagan* was in fact less self-consciously concerned with its own modernity than a number of other magazines of the period. It appears to have been concerned to present new authors; authors so new in fact that some of them did not later acknowledge their own early appearances in the magazine. In contrast to the other three magazines here *The Pagan* did not announce its *raison d'être* by any formal editorial or manifesto, but its general aims and alignments are evident from the interspersed short paragraphs throughout each issue consisting of Joseph Kling's own remarks. It aligned itself within the general space of contentious magazines of the time, and is presumably issued for a similar 'counterpublic'. Given its high proportion of work by Jewish authors and artists, and its declared love of Judaism, the magazine's editor perhaps elected to perform a consciousness-raising function for a broadly secular readership who for the most part had come to New York from other American towns. I have stressed the Jewish content of *The Pagan* in chapter 4, partly because it is a significant feature of the magazine and warrants critical exploration, but partly because of the lack of this particular racial dimension in most studies of periodicals of this and any age, particularly those which are concerned with early modernism in urban America. *The Pagan* promoted a working-class, politicised, realistic, cosmopolitan newness which was unique in its time particularly for being concerned not to make the working class into objects of either charity or pity.

The use of the advertising parallel perhaps requires a little more justification here. It does not necessarily hold, of course, that magazines offer a soother. They are often in the business of a kind of in-your-face marketing of new literary and artistic products and using their own lack of apology as, in itself, a way to advertise their product. Hence the famous ‘no compromise with public taste’ and blank pages of *The Little Review* and *The Masses* ‘aiming to conciliate no-one, not even its readers.’ One thinks of parallels - of Filippo Marinetti pouring invectives on to delighted Wigmore Hall audiences in 1913, or Sid Vicious entrancing a whole generation of punk rockers by spitting on the nearest of them. The editorials in these magazines are aimed not at the public but aim to appeal to a consolidated counter-public. The recognition that creative people must respond to a new world with a new art is, I think, abundantly present in all the periodicals I have addressed here. Furthermore, it would be true, but reductive, to say that all of them were, in the end, dependent on the system to which they all offer literary, critical, artistic, aesthetic, and sometimes political alternatives. But they do in every case stretch that position to the limit and in each case are eager to bite the hand that feeds them, with the results I have described.

One other point is worth mentioning, something which has been implicit and seems obvious enough, but perhaps its importance needs to be stressed. In the time about which I am writing, magazines, newspapers, and periodicals were of course among the *primary* sites of public debate and opinion; it would be quite wrong for instance to read Oppenheim’s ‘Lazy Verse’ article as though it were written in isolation, and not as part of an ongoing media debate which was conducted not only in the minority press or even the high-end monthlies, but in everyday newspapers such as *The New York Times*.<sup>53</sup> To read Bourne’s pacifist essays in *The Seven Arts* in isolation would be to ignore the considerable previous two-year debate on American War participation at all levels of the media, and rival articles in *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Republic*. These debates were undoubtedly the Twitter of the day, the Radio 4 blog of the era. Correspondence with newspapers and periodicals was the media centre rather than the periphery which it now is. I have stressed the idea of commerce, as dialogue and as dialogic, in the way I have approached the related chapters on *291* and *The*

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<sup>53</sup> For example Oppenheim, ‘Democracy in Verse and Art’, *New York Times* (30 January 1916), part of a series of letters and articles on poetry in *The New York Times* which he had initiated back in 1907, and whose supporters, in that paper, included Louis Untermeyer and Amy Lowell.



*Soil*; but one could also for example detail an extended conversation between *The Seven Arts* and *The New Republic*.<sup>54</sup> I have used the idea again in the contrast between *The Pagan* and *The Masses*. It is tempting to dramatise these publications as lone voices in a conventional American wilderness, but while they were sometimes radically dissenting voices they spoke within the context of a broader debate on American arts and letters.

It is, therefore, evident that commerce, in all its senses, is an issue of central importance to these selected periodicals; similar arguments could probably be raised for many more. As indicated in my Introduction, I have traced a discourse of commerce and a commerce of ideas through the ‘cultural networks’ relevant to these magazines, relating to their dialogics, antipathies, and general cross-currents of ideas. Their lack of homogeneity would question any attempt to place them in a category called simply ‘the little review’ merely because they happened to be the products of a small group or an individual, even though their audience appeal was broadly to the same section of society. I have referred from time to time to a schematic framework inspired by the work of Bourdieu, but the range of positions represented by these magazines is too broad and too complex to be easily representable on a diagrammatic network of trajectories such as Bourdieu might suggest. This is despite the fact that this thesis would clearly add weight to the idea that critical work in the arts and humanities must include relevant economic considerations, as well as the important idea that the accrual of cultural and symbolic capital leads to (and is perhaps governed by) the long-term accrual of economic capital. The fact that these periodicals are interdisciplinary objects also supports the idea that financial considerations underpin not only the propagation and dissemination and subsequent canonical position of works of literature but also works of art and music.

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<sup>54</sup> Raverty’s approach to Coady’s views in *The Soil*, for instance, notes Coady’s ongoing comments in *The New York Sun* as well. Moreau’s biography of Randolph Bourne details a series of articles in *The New Republic* as well as the moment when Bourne joined *The Seven Arts* and found a unique platform for his opinions.

Each magazine acts on, and is affected by, other periodicals in the field; these interconnections become very apparent on examination of the text and contents. Within the field, however, there is a common thread: that of their collective, but varied, response to modern American society through embrace of what were perceived as its progressive virtues or rejection of its repressive vices. The periodicals display, collectively, an ambivalent rejection of the idea that artistic ideals can or do function within commercial or industrial American society, but at the same time none of them wholly rejects that society or its methods of operation. Thus they can be shown, broadly, as Bourdieu would suggest, to be inextricably affected by the larger fields of class and power conflicts. In spite of their geographical and temporal closeness, however, they each operate very differently and reveal contrasting and conflicting views; even their retrospective classification as 'little magazines' is questionable.

I have shown, too, that while many critical studies of magazines concentrate on the literary history of one or other author or artist there is much to be gained from this emphasis on commerce in the sense of dialogue and conversation with each other and with the surrounding culture; the advertisements (and this fact has begun to be generally accepted within the discipline of periodical studies) are of importance in the examination of an assumed readership, its expectations and possible income. While it is clearly important that certain authors or artists who later became well-known produced early work in these periodicals, it is equally instructive to have taken an approach which does not privilege one author or editor over another; the mixture of authors, poets, artists, critics, and pseudonymous work present in all these periodicals then becomes less of a marker within a historically-constructed literary field and more of an indication of the dynamism of the American intellectual scene soon after the beginning of the twentieth century.

Most recent expositions of the role of commerce within modernism concentrate largely on marketing, on the way that modernists profess indifference to payment but ensure that either this indifference is marketed (as Joyce Wexler has said of Lawrence, the 'central irony of Lawrence's career was that being unpublishable made him

profitable') or modified their work according to publishers' guidelines.<sup>55</sup> This thesis has been a somewhat more ambitious examination of the role of commerce in certain periodicals, and a wider application of its meaning. The notion of commerce as dialogic intertext, and subject of discourse has allowed this thesis also to reflect on early American modernism, each magazine addressing an aspect of American newness in a particular way. For the future one might wish to use a comparative study of American, British, and European magazines to shed further light on exactly how these historical modernisms, or avant-gardes, compare, and what the cross-influences were. Taken together these four periodicals indicate some of the convergences and divergences, tensions and contradictions, paradoxes and platitudes of one of the most fertile times in American intellectual history. The year 1922 has been critically appraised as an 'annus mirabilis' of American modernism and the 1920s generally credited with the emergence of the modernist scene, but it is apparent that ideas on modernity were fermenting a decade before, in the ongoing exchange between reviews, periodicals, magazines, dailies, weeklies, and monthlies of all kinds, and with all manner of agendas.

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<sup>55</sup> Joyce Wexler, *Who Paid For Modernism? Art, Money, and the Fiction of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), p. 121; also see Wexler on the self-censorship of *Sons and Lovers* by Lawrence in order to meet publishers' criteria. Further, recent academic enthusiasm for periodicals and their contents has inevitably had an effect on the commercial value of original issues: single copies of *The Pagan* (rare, as the bookseller intimates, partly because of the variable and sometimes very poor quality of the paper on which it is printed), originally priced at 10 cents, have been offered for sale for up to 400 US dollars. As an academic, then, I am unavoidably involved in the process to which I repeatedly call attention: that whereby cultural capital eventually accrues material capital.

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